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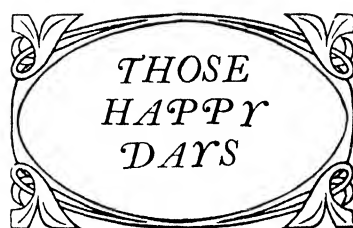
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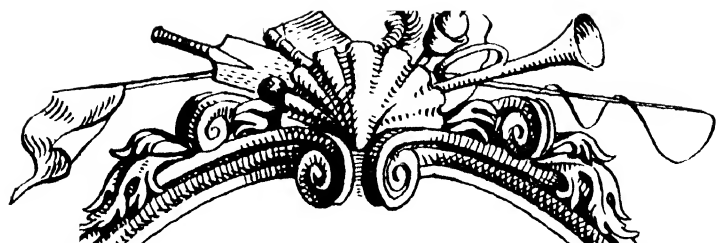
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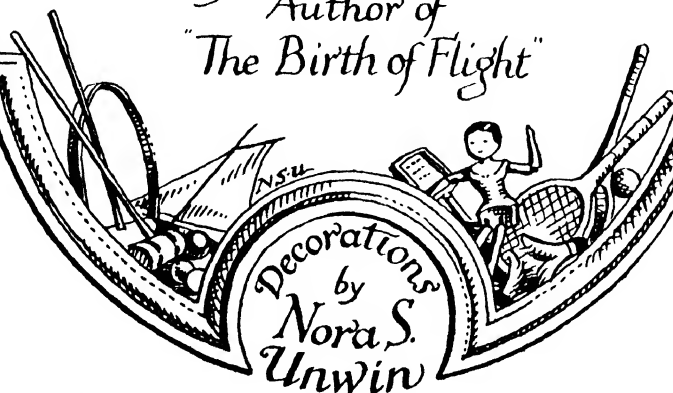


THOSE HAPPY DAYS

An Anthology of
Childhood
by

Hartley Kemball Cook

Author of
"The Birth of Flight"



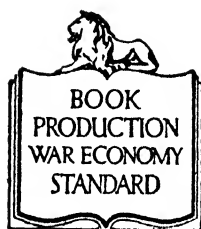
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TO
E. K. C.
WIFE AND PARTNER

AND FOR
MICHAEL



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WOKING

FOREWORD

I HOPE that this book may find a corner on the shelves of the Transition Literature of our country. Of all the questions which must come up for settlement before we can enter on the Promised Land, the possession of which is to crown the losses and sacrifices of war, there can be none more important than that of Childhood, the relation between parents and children, the education of parents and the education of their sons and daughters, the scientific management of the nursery, while preserving the paramount place of motherhood in the first years of child life, the place of religion in education—there is no end to the demands of childhood in the reconstruction of the world.

In speeches in the country we have heard of the necessity for a real Department of Childhood and Youth, but before we can build up anything new, it is essential that we should know something of the past and it is this which I have tried to supply in the pages of this book. We must look back over our own history with two objects in view; we must try to see where our ancestors went wrong in the management of childhood in all its phases but we must not make the mistake of assuming that we have nothing to learn from the past. There were wise schoolmasters and wise parents in the past. We can learn something surely from Roger Ascham, from Thomas More, from Henry Sidney, and from the mother of the Norths.

I have confined my survey to our own country and to that period of our history which may fairly be called that of Modern Britain—the period which began with the Tudors and the destruction of the feudal system.

What is Childhood? For my own purpose I have assumed that it covers the years between birth and the dawn of adolescence, ending, roughly, when the majority leaves school and the minority passes from preparatory to public school. It is true that this period has varied at different stages of our social history, and the Butler Act will produce still further changes, but it is not easy to find a better dividing line.

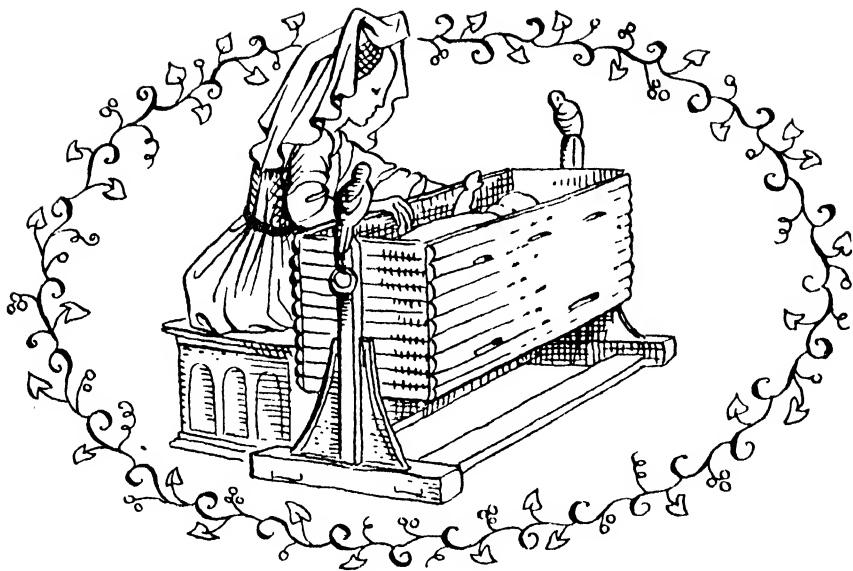
Finally this is an Anthology, not a History, and the Anthologist

claims this great advantage over the Historian: he can range at will over time and space within the limits set by himself and he can choose where he will his illustrative anecdotes. The Reader, admittedly, has his privilege also and it has been said that the chief pleasure many people derive from an Anthology lies in wondering whether it was by malice or mere ignorance that the Anthologist left out this or that "favourite passage."—But the Anthologist need not explain. Nor, I trust, need he apologise for interweaving with these stories of other people's childhood, some memories of his own.

H. K. C.

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CHAPTER ONE

Peep o' Day

IN order to get properly started in life it is necessary to acquire a name of one's own so we will begin with Christenings. Many discussions range round the question of the Christian name. Is a boy, for instance, to take his father's name? There has been much difference of opinion on this point. Motives of modesty, as we shall see, influenced that very conscientious man and father Sir Ralph Verney in forbidding, however fruitlessly, his wife to name a son after him. On the other hand when Alfred Tennyson was wondering how he should name his son and heir, someone made the obvious suggestion. "Supposing," the poet retorted, "the child should turn out to be a fool?" No such doubts disturbed Mr. Dombey.

"THE house will once again, Mrs. Dombey," said Mr. Dombey, "be not only in name but in fact Dombey and Son! Dom-bey and Son."

... "He will be christened Paul, my—Mrs. Dombey—of course." She feebly echoed, "Of course," or rather expressed it by the motion of her lips and closed her eyes again.

"His father's name, Mrs. Dombey, and his grandfather's! I wish

his grandfather were alive this day!" And again he said "Dom-bey and Son" in exactly the same tone as before.

"Dombey and Son" in exactly the same tone as before. Sometimes the desire to maintain the succession has been so strong that every son has had the family Christian name included among his. On the other hand there are many stories of eccentricities in Christian names, such as Canon Ainger's of the mother who announced a decision to call a child "Octopus" on the ground that it was the eighth in the family. My father had a groom who had served on the North-West frontier and liked to call his children after battles in which he had taken part and I remember that one of my sisters was asked to stand god-mother to an unfortunate babe burdened with the name of Hazara. I recall this case with intention because it has been observed that war time does inflict strange names on helpless infants. In Victorian days when women were supposed not to like confessing their ages, quite a number must have resented Alma as a Christian name. In the South African war names of the more popular generals were heaped on the heads of male infants and the babies of 1914-1918 were fortunate if they escaped similar burdens. This infliction may be even more serious in the immediate future than in the past. There was some hope, in the schools of half a century ago, of being able to conceal an unfortunate (that is to say, an unusual) Christian name. Nowadays however Christian names are used with much greater freedom, to say nothing of the demands of bureaucracy, so that parents are well advised to add some ordinary name to an unusual one. Perhaps it might be added that, in an age when titles are so prolific, the really tactful parent will take the opposite course and add a second and flowery name so that, for instance, Mr. Paul Dombey may, on receiving a knighthood, blossom out into Sir Vavasour Dombey. Finally there have been cases, like that of Tristram Shandy, in which a child has been saved by accident from an appalling name. Before we consider Christenings we ought perhaps to remember something which had quite an important place in the earliest stages of life. David Copperfield tells us

I WAS born with a caul, which was advertised for sale, in the newspapers, at the low price of fifteen guineas. Whether sea-going people

were short of money about that time, or were short of faith and preferred cork jackets, I don't know; all I know is, that there was but one solitary bidding, and that was from an attorney connected with the bill-broking business, who offered two pounds in cash, and the balance in sherry, but declined to be guaranteed from drowning on any higher bargain. Consequently the advertisement was withdrawn at a dead loss . . . and ten years afterwards the caul was put up in a raffle, down in our part of the country, to fifty members at half a crown a head, the winner to spend five shillings. I was present myself, and I remember to have felt quite uncomfortable and confused at a part of myself being disposed of in that way. The caul was won, I recollect, by an old lady with a hand-basket, . . . It is a fact that will be long remembered as remarkable down there, that she was never drowned but died triumphantly in bed, at ninety-two.

In the Spring of 1647 a baby was expected in the family of the Verneys of Claydon, and Sir Ralph, out of England in those troublous times, wrote home about it.

HAVE a parson ready to christen the childe (any way will satisfye mee soe it bee christened) the best way to prevent all ~~da~~nger and avoyde all trouble, will bee to dispatch it (the christening) as soone as it is borne & that as privately as may bee. Richard is a good name for a boy & your owne for a girle, but let it not be Susan's, Thomas', nor my owne. I charge you . . . I know not whether godfathers & god-mothers are used now in England; tis no grate matter if they are not, but if they bee take Harry, Dr. or any other that are next at hand. And let me intereate you to looke out a carefull rather than a fine nursekeeper, for twill be impossible for you to bee without one. If you neede 2 take them, spare for no charge wherein your health is concerned. Bee sure the childe's name be~~y~~entred in ye Church booke to prevent all questions hereafter.

But Lady Verney was not to be dictated to about the child's name

IF itt be a boy I am resolved to have itt of thy owne name, therefore I charge you doe not contredict itt; But if it bee a girle I leave it wholly to thee to chuse . . . I will be governed by the~~y~~ in anything but the name if it be a boy, for to tell the truth, I must have itt have thy name. And for the suddaine crising I will obay thee, and get a minester in the howse that will doe itt in the old way, for tis nott the fashion here

to have godfathers or godmothers, butt for the father to bring the childe to church and answer for itt.

. . . Truly one lives like a heathen in this place; since I have recovered my healthe, I have gonn to our perrish church, but could neaver but one time get any roome there for all the money I offered. And eyther I must be at the charge to hire a coache to trye all the churches or else sitt at home; and when one gets roome one hears a very strange kind of sarvis, and in such a tone that most people doe noething but laugh at it.

Still Sir Ralph tries to hold his ground about the name

IF it bee a boy, in earnest you must not deny mee, let it bee Richard or what you please, except my own name. Really I shall take it ill if you contradict me in this. If it bee a sonne I trust God will make him a better and happier man than his father. . . Now for the christening I pray give noe offence to the State; should it be donn in the olde way parhapps it may bring more trouble uppou you than you can immagen, and all to noe purpose, for soe it be donn with common ordinarie water, and that these words 'I baptise thee in the name of the Father and of the Sonne and of the Holy Ghost' bee used with the water, I know the child is well baptised.

Such were some of the difficulties in beginning life in a family in the bad books of the dominant party in the Civil War and under threat of sequestration. But those familiar with such subjects will not be surprised to learn that, in face of Sir Ralph's protests, the new arrival was christened Ralph.

And merry making at christenings was not quite impossible under the Puritan régime for, of another such occasion, we read that it was "not without a fidler and a merry cup and the toast of Sir Ralph's health." In 1655, when Sir Ralph was laid by the heels, he was unable to keep a promise to be a godfather and his deputy wrote

FOR want of a godly godfather, they invited my worshipp to stand, for which in a word I did with a grave & religious grace; many promises I did make for you, such if you performe not, shall bee put on your score in the next world, and not mine for I doe as little love deepe and sollem ingagements, as your honour doth entringe into bonds. I have given 20s. to the nurse and 20s. to the midwife and 10s. to the nurse-keeper as you ordered.

Charles II we learn from Lady Cowper had a fixed tariff when acting as Godfather. He

NEVER gave more on such an occasion than five guineas to a commoner's nurses, ten to a Baron's, twenty to an Earl's and so raised five guineas in every degree. 'Tis true things are altered since that time for now people of quality sometimes give fifteen guineas; but it our folly has increased this, as it has every other expense.

All this rose (in 1714) from

A GREAT dispute upon what the Princess was to give at christening. She had been Godmother to Mrs. Harcourt's child and the Prince Godfather and they had sent thirty guineas between them which our ladies thought too little.

We hear of "a silver sugar box and coddle cup" among christening presents, and of "a fine white mantle to lay over the head of the cradle and a smaller one to match to wrap the child in when taken out or to form a quilt."

A few years later Pepys takes us to a christening party

. . . IN the afternoon with my Lady Batten, Pen and her daughter and my wife, to Mrs. Poole's, where I mighty merry among the women, and christened the child, a girl, Elizabeth which, though a girl, my Lady Batten would have me to give the name. After christening comes Sir W. Batten, Sir W. Penn, and Mr. Lowther, and mighty merry there, and I forfeited for not kissing the two godmothers presently after the christening before I kissed the mother which made good mirth. . . .

Naturally the cost of a christening differed a good deal according to the standing of the parents. Thus there is a record among the Percy papers of the cost of the christening of "the young Lord Percy" May 6, 1598; with "Rewards etc," the amount was £85 19s. 2d. There is a good deal of variation in estimates of the value of money at different epochs but presumably this would be equivalent to a sum of not less than £750 to-day.

We have seen, in the case of Verney christenings, something of payments to nurses. On April 5, 1703, Lord Stanhope wrote from Lichfield to Thomas Coke, M.P.

I WISH you much joy of your daughter & take it very kindly that you and my sister are pleased to think of me for a godfather for my little niece. Since I am not in town I desire you would make choice of whom you please to represent me . . . Pray distribute five guineas for me among the caudle makers.

Tristram Shandy, it will be remembered, had to wait a long time, as measured in pages, to acquire a name at all and then his father's choice was governed by an unfortunate accident at birth.

THOUGH man is of all others the most curious vehicle, said my father, yet at the same time 'tis of so slight frame and so totteringly put together that the sudden jerks and hard jostlings it invariably meets with in this rugged journey, would upset and tear it to pieces a dozen times a day—was it not, Brother Toby, that there is a secret spring within us—Which spring, said my Uncle Toby, I take to be Religion—will that set my child's nose on? cried my father, letting go his finger and striking one hand against the other—It makes everything straight for us, answered my Uncle Toby—Figuratively speaking, dear Toby, it may, for aught I know, said my father; but the spring I am speaking of is that great and elastic power within us of counter-balancing evil, which like a secret spring in a well ordered machine, though it can't prevent the shock—at least it imposes upon our sense of it. Now, my dear brother, said my father, replacing his fore finger, as he was coming closer to the point—had my child arrived safe into the world, unmartyr'd in that precious part of him—fanciful and extravagant as I may appear to the world in my opinion of christian names, and of that magic bias which good or bad names irresistibly impress upon our characters and conduct—Heaven is witness that in the warmest transports of my wishes for the prosperity of my child, I never once wished to crown his head with more glory and honour than what GEORGE or EDWARD would have spread around it.

But alas, continued my father, as the greatest evil has befallen him—I must counteract and undo it with the greatest good.

He shall be christened Trismegistus, brother.

I wish it may answer—replied my Uncle Toby, rising up.

But before this intention could be carried out Mr. Shandy was roused from sleep one night with the news that the child was in a fit and that the curate was waiting in the dressing room for the name. Making a desperate effort to impress the chosen name on the maid's memory,

he hurried into his clothes while the maid "ran with all speed along the gallery."

SUSANNAH got the start and kept it—'Tis Tris—something, cried Susannah—There is no Christian name in the world, said the Curate, beginning with Tris—but Tristram.

Then 'tis Tristram-gistus, quoth Susannah.

There is no gistus to it, noodle;—'tis my own name, replied the curate, dipping his hand, as he spoke, into the bason—Tristram said he, etc etc etc etc—so Tristram was I called and Tristram shall I be to the day of my death.

As a contrast to this exciting business might be quoted the icy coldness of the christening of young Paul Dombey

LITTLE Paul might have asked with Hamlet, 'Into my grave?' so chill and earthy was the place. The tall shrouded pulpit and reading desk; the dreary perspective of empty pews stretching away under the galleries, and empty benches mounting to the roof and lost in the shadow of the great grim organ; the dusty matting and cold stone slabs; the grisly free seats in the aisles; and the damp corner by the bell-rope, where the black tressels used for funerals were stowed away, along with some shovels and baskets, and a coil or two of deadly-looking rope; the strange, unusual, uncomfortable smell, and the cadaverous light; were all in unison. It was a cold and dismal scene. . . .

Presently the clerk (the only cheerful looking object there, and *he* was an undertaker) came up with a jug of warm water and said something, as he poured it into the font, about taking the chill off; which millions of gallons boiling hot could not have done for the occasion. Then the clergyman, an amiable and mild-looking young curate, but obviously afraid of the baby, appeared like the principal character in a ghost story, 'A tall figure all in white;' at sight of whom Paul rent the air with his cries, and never left off again till he was taken out black in the face.

Different again was Haydon's story of the abortive christening of Hazlitt's son in 1812

IN the midst of Hazlitt's weaknesses, his parental affections were beautiful. He had one boy. He loved him. He doated on him. He told me one night this boy was to be christened. 'Will ye come on Friday?' 'Certainly,' said I. His eye glistened. Friday came, but as I knew all

parties I lunched heartily first and was there punctually at four. Hazlitt then lived in Milton's house, Westminster . . . At four I came but he was out. I walked up and found his wife ill by the fire in a bed gown—nothing ready for guests, and everything wearing the appearance of neglect and indifference. I said, 'Where is Hazlitt?' 'Oh dear, William has gone to look for a parson.' 'A parson; why, has he not thought of that before?' 'No, he didn't.' 'I'll go and look for him,' said I, and out I went into the Park through Queen's Square and met Hazlitt in a rage coming home. 'Have ye got a parson?' 'No, sir,' said he, 'these fellows are all out.' 'What will ye do?' 'Nothing.' So in we walked, Hazlitt growling at all the parsons and the church.

When we came in we sat down—nobody was come;—no table laid,—no appearance of dinner . . . I sat down, the company began to drop in—Charles Lamb and his poor sister—all sorts of odd, clever people. Still no dinner. At last came in a maid who laid a cloth and put down knives and forks in a heap. Then followed a dish of potatoes, cold, waxy and yellow. Then came a great bit of beef with a bone like a battering ram toppling on all its corners. Neither Hazlitt nor Lamb seemed at all disturbed, but set to work helping each other! while the boy, half clean and obstinate, kept squalling to put his fingers into the gravy.

Thomas Hardy put all his tragic power into the christening of the unwanted child of Tess of the D'Urbervilles

TESS . . . stood erect with the infant on her arm beside the basin, the next sister held the prayer-book open before her, as the clerk in church held it before the parson; and thus the girl set about baptising her child.

Her figure looked singularly tall and imposing as she stood in her long white night-gown, a thick cable of twisted dark hair hanging straight down her back to her waist. The kindly dimness of the weak candle abstracted from her form and features the little blemishes which sunlight might have revealed . . . Her high enthusiasm having a transfiguring effect upon the face which had been her undoing, showing it as a thing of immaculate beauty, with an impress of dignity which was almost regal. The little ones kneeling round, their sleepy eyes blinking and red, awaited her preparations full of a suspended wonder which their physical heaviness at their hour would not allow to become active. The most impressed of them said: 'Be you really going to christen him, Tess?' The girl-mother replied in a grave affirmative 'What's his name going to be?' She had not thought of that, but a

name suggested by a phrase in the book of Genesis came into her head as she proceeded with the baptismal Service, and now she pronounced it: 'SORROW, I baptise thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' She sprinkled the water and there was silence. 'Say "Amen," children.' The tiny voices piped in obedient response 'Amen!' Tess went on: 'We receive this child'—and so forth—'And do sign him with the sign of the Cross.'

Here she dipped her hand into the basin, and fervently drew an immense cross upon the baby with her forefinger, continuing with the customary sentences as to his manfully fighting against sin, the world, and the devil, and being a faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end. She duly went on with the Lord's Prayer, the children lisping it after her in a thin gnat-like wail till, at the conclusion, raising their voices to clerk's pitch, they again piped into the silence 'Amen!'

We have seen that, during the Commonwealth period godparents were not thought necessary. Mr. Dombey's doubts about them rose from another source, as his sister discovered when she ventured the opinion that "Godfathers, of course, are important in point of connection and influence."—"I don't know why they should be to my son," said Mr. Dombey, coldly. And he went on to embroider his theme.

PAUL and myself will be able, when the time comes, to hold our own—the House, in other words, will be able to hold its own, and maintain its own and hand down its own of itself, and without any such commonplace aids. The kind of foreign help which people usually seek for their children I can afford to despise; being above it, I hope. So that Paul's infancy and childhood pass away well, and I see him becoming qualified without waste of time for the career on which he is destined to enter, I am satisfied. He will make what powerful friends he pleases in after life when he is actively maintaining—and extending, if that is possible—the dignity and credit of the Firm. Until then I am enough for him, perhaps, and all in all. I have no wish that people should step in between us. I would much rather show my sense of the obliging conduct of a deserving person like your friend. Therefore let it be so; and your husband and myself will do well enough for the other sponsors I dare say.

Yet in spite of Mr. Dombey's opinion the generality of parents will be found to favour names which may be supposed to give a child a

good start in life—was not Sir Pitt Crawley named after the great Commoner and his father after the great Minister of George II? And did not Charles Stuart Crawley become Barebones Crawley in recognition of the Commonwealth?

There are accidents unavoidable sometimes where friends or relations are chosen with a view to benefits to be derived for the child from their acceptance of office. For myself I have always found a peculiar poignancy in that scene in "David Copperfield" in which Miss Betsy Trotwood, having announced her intention to act as God-mother and her presentiment that the baby must be a girl, learns David's sex from the doctor.

MY aunt said never a word but took her bonnet by the strings, in the manner of a sling, aimed a blow at Mr. Chillip's head with it, put it on bent, walked out, and never came back. She vanished like a discontented fairy; or like one of those supernatural beings whom it was popularly supposed I was entitled to see; and never came back any more.

A wealthy friend of my mother's had expressed a wish to stand sponsor for her next child and, like Miss Trotwood, "had a presentiment" that it was to be a girl. She stood sponsor by proxy but made it plain that I was little better than a mistake, walked out of my life . . . and I never went in search of her.

Big families are the exception nowadays but Georgiana, Lady Bloomfield, was told that her father, walking in Portland Place, was much struck by the beauty of a baby carried by a nurse. He stopped her and asked whose child it was. Greatly scandalised, she replied "Your own, Sir Thomas."



CHAPTER TWO

The Nursery

THE NURSERY is not what it was. Walking through a large shop the other day I stopped entranced before a pile of rugs or small carpets portraying scenes from Fairyland. Then there are wall dadoes telling all day long the stories of Cinderella and the rest. There are various kinds of hygienic nursery furniture and toys of which we never dreamed. But to most of us whose nurseries belong to the Victorian era there come back memories which vary very little and varied very little also I suspect over a century or two of nurseries. Here are some personal memories which will stand pretty well for a nursery of the past.

I REMEMBER a room high up in a house in a Crescent in a seaside town. The room was cheerful in spite of windows barred because children were always suspect of "getting up to something" though nurse or nursemaid were never far away. We could look out of the windows by climbing on to the red covered ottoman—a forgotten piece of furniture which was really a capacious lidded box covered with some bright material—placed in each window recess. On these

we could kneel. Set at an angle was an ample fireplace with a black kettle always singing on the hob but out of our reach since there was a high fire-guard with a bright brass top in front of the fire.

As it happens I have just read a letter written in the year 1840, in which a mother, too devoted to her children, is described as "ensconcing herself inside the high wire nursery fender, and one saw her in the uncomfortable way in which, when we were bairns, you may remember we used to see the fire, never getting at it enough."

OUR elders did not doubt that if we failed to tumble out of the window we should fall into the fire and so provided this formidable barrier. A little below the mantelpiece was a line on which small articles were drying. On the mantelpiece was an old-fashioned cuckoo clock and it was one of the legends of my childhood that in the early springs of the 1880's someone was sure to write a letter to the local paper announcing that he had heard a cuckoo when walking through M—— Crescent. On the mantelpiece were framed photographs (unflattering) of our parents and over it was a detestably illuminated card with Charles Kingsley's

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever;
Do noble things, not dream them all day long;
And so make life, death, and that vast for-ever
One glad, sweet song.

I suppose that this was the first piece of verse I ever spelt out and it filled me with joy that I was not a girl. Lizzie, the nurse, took pains to explain to me, however, that as there was no fear of my being clever, I might just as well try to be good. Another picture which I remember was that of a blonde and anaemic girl with a lamb and, of course, Cherry Ripe (from a Christmas supplement) was there. I do not remember very clearly how the walls were papered and I daresay my nursery life outlasted several papers. A dull coloured carpet bought, no doubt, for hard wear, covered the floor. On one side of the fireplace was a rocking chair for nurse; on the other a prim arm-chair for my mother or any other Olympian visitor. In the centre of the room was a well-scrubbed table normally carrying a faded red cloth. In the space between the windows was a handsome dappled rocking horse. I remember also two of those high chairs with trays in front in which babies were encased. Above the rocking horse was a book-case with our favourites; fairy tales contributed at

Christmas by an uncle who was Editor of a newspaper and so no doubt "much exposed to authors." There, too, was the ever delightful Struwwelpeter—which had to lie flat—and on it rested the two "Alices." In the ottomans our toys lived and I think there was generally a doll's chair against the wall with whatever doll happened to be in favour with my sisters at the moment. In front of the door to keep out draughts was a screen gaily covered with Christmas cards and Christmas supplement pictures. The room was lit by a single gas jet, and in it and in the night nursery adjoining (or in rooms very similar) Victorian children and Georgian children before them spent the greater part of their lives.

On state occasions we were specially scrubbed, forced into abominably smart clothes and convoyed by the nursery maid down the stairs to be introduced to afternoon tea guests in the drawing-room. To this indignity I, for one, never submitted without protest and Nurse always instructed her aide to remain at hand after she had pushed me into the room, since it was fairly certain to be necessary to pull me out again quickly. As such things go my first yell at the sight of strangers was bearable, but it was as well to get me out of hearing if possible before I embarked on the second. And so in disgrace back to shed those uncomfortable clothes in the familiar atmosphere of snugness and roast mutton.

Whatever may be the case to-day it used to be considered positively sinful to be unwell and this was impressed upon us by the unpromising character of the medicines administered. To be ill was to be "tiresome." Let me draw again on my own recollections.

THERE is an old saying about jam and powder but I cannot remember that such concessions were made in our nursery. Medicine was medicine and generally nasty, nor was it any advantage to have a medical man in the family—"You don't take medicine for pleasure!"—rather the contrary. Before I die I hope that I may be given grace to forgive all the enemies collected in a longish life, but of one of them I have grave doubts though, to be sure, he was dead long before I was born. This was a certain Dr. James Gregory, member of a distinguished Edinburgh family and Professor of the Practice of Medicine in that City at the end of the 18th century. Of him I read that he "compounded Gregory's powders and was a great controversialist." The two things seem to go very well together. I can imagine him compounding that hideous stuff and thinking out new ways of being

rude to those with whom he disagreed. Generations of children have cursed his name. I like to think of him in purgatory compelled to swallow one of his doses nightly. To this day what might otherwise be the cheerful rattle of spoon in glass sends a cold shiver down my back. Gregory powder was the worst but there was also senna in hot milk. This would be brought with an admonitory "I shall be back in ten minutes and I shall expect to find every drop of it gone." In the ordinary life of a child ten minutes is a long time; not so with senna; the minutes raced past as one looked into the abhorred cup, watched derisively by more fortunate brothers and sisters. Then came a whisper "She's coming," and with one desperate gulp the cup would be emptied.

Yet I suspect that we were better off than the children of a century earlier. A certain Major Starkey denouncing the barbarities of the Nursery of the later 18th century dilates on the constant use of Dalby's Carminative, Daffy's Elixir and Godfrey's Cordial and continues

THE child was not to be put on its legs too soon but was kept in arms till ten or twelve months old. By this means the body, being widely distended, was too heavy to be sustained by the weak and comparatively diminutive limbs, and then a go-cart was provided, a sort of circular frame-work running on wheels with a door to open for the admission of the child wherein being bolted and the upper part being only so large as to admit its body from below the arms, the child rested by the armpits and kicking its legs on the floor set the machine rolling on its wheels; this being the customary mode of bringing children up till about 1790 few were without a general disorder and weakness of frame called the rickets. Those afflicted were sometimes hump-backed and usually bow-shinned though to remedy the latter defect in some degree the legs were fastened by straps to jointed arms.

In the matter of medicine the 17th century children seem to have been more fortunate. Here, for instance, is what we are told about the nursery of the North family from which emerged a Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, a Chancellor of the Exchequer, a Master of Trinity College and the accomplished lawyer who wrote the "Lives" of the family

WEE were indulged full liberty of drinking small beer as often as wee had a minde. For which end there was always a stone botle kept going

in our quarters, for every one to resort too. . . . There was another use made of this botle, for our Mother would steal into it Slices of Rhubarb and other Medicinall things she thought fit for us and wee came by use to like it so better than when plaine; which saved the ungrateful! Importunity and Reluctance between parents and children about phisick, which generally is extream odious to them; but this way, it was stole upon us untainted with aversions which I am perswaded does more harm than medicin profits.

But in those days the compounding of Gregory powders lay far in the future.

It must not be supposed, however, that discipline was lax in the North nurseries:

THE Government of us was in generall severe, but tender; our mother maintained her authority and yet condescended to entertain us. She was learned (for a lady) and eloquent. Had much knowledg of History and readyness of witt to express herself, especially in the part of Reproof, wherein she was fluent and urgent. And not only her children but servants dreaded her Reproof, knowing how sensibly she would attac them and in the most nice and tender articles that concerned them. But without occasion given to the Contrary, she was debonair, familiar and very liberall of her discours to entertein all and ever tending to goodness and morality. This saved us that were children and of Stubborne spirits as such usually are, the trouble and Inconvenience of contesting points with her, for we knew beforehand from the steady conduct of her authority that submission was the best cours, and Comported accordingly. It is not to be imagined how Ill customes at first breed trouble to parents when children have by some Instances found their parents yield, it breeds such a willfulness, that it becomes almost desperate to cross them and they will persevere in crying till they are busten, or fall in fits, all which is prevented by early caution. We had, as I sayd, stubborne spirits and would often set up for ourselves and try the experiment, but she would reduce to termes by the smart of correction! and which was mor grievous, would force us to leave crying, and condiscnt to the abject pitch of thanking the Good Rail which she said was to breake our spirits which it did effectually. Lady St. Helier whose memories went far back into the early Victorian period wrote of her own childhood:

THE recollections of a child are generally accurate and some of them indicate how different the conditions of life are now from what they

were . . . The process of hardening and bracing which children underwent undoubtedly made them strong men and women and we who survived had our constitution subjected to the most rigid tests. Such a thing as a hot bath, except on Saturday evenings, was unknown. Cold water, winter and summer, was provided for us; we had no fire in our bedrooms, and in the winter we had, not infrequently, to break the ice on top of our bath before we plunged in. We had porridge for breakfast and porridge for tea; meat in the middle of the day; and on Sunday as a great treat, bread and butter and jam for tea. My mother was a great believer in the simple life and we spent many happy days staying with some tenants in a little farmhouse on the hill side during the summer and autumn months, living the same kind of life as our hosts.

The earliest recollections of Georgiana, Lady Bloomfield, who was born in 1822, were confusing in one respect

my eldest brother Henry, afterwards first Lord of Ravensworth, and my eldest sister Maria, Marchioness of Normanby, were married before I was born; and my nephews George Henry Constantine, Marquis of Normanby, and Henry, second Earl of Ravensworth, were both older than myself, so that I was always called the 'little Aunty.' When I was about three years old my parents were disturbed one morning by a violent scuffle and altercations on the stairs leading to their room and . . . Jack Phipps, as he was then called, was found in tears because he said his little Aunty was so naughty she would not allow him to carry her upstairs. My earliest recollections are of hearing the watchman call the hours in Portland Place, and of having a great terror of highwaymen because my father would never travel into London after dark, for fear of the carriage being robbed . . . When I was four years old I was taken to a child's ball at St. James's given by King George IV and I distinctly remember his Majesty who was sitting on a sofa and patted me kindly on the head; but I was greatly aggrieved because my father carried me off before supper, so I did not get my share of the beautiful bon-bons which my brothers brought home.

I have mentioned iron bars in connection with old fashioned nurseries, but they did not always make "a cage" secure against the ingenuity of childhood, as may be learnt from the Reminiscences of Mrs. E. M. Ward of a family famous in art history. Left alone on the balcony one morning, when a small child, she got hold of a fishing rod and

LEANING slyly over the railings, prepared to follow the Biblical mandate and become an accomplished angler for men. At length . . . my hook held fast and, peeping cautiously into the street, I perceived it had actually caught someone's top hat. Oh! the delirium of that triumphant moment—the never to be forgotten thrills of delicious and patiently earned victory, and the exquisite joy with which I resorted to my reel and began to wind up the trophy. But the fish fought; at least it swore, and in the most undignified and non-piscatorial fashion which, however, far from frightening me, only made me laugh the louder; like a true sportsman I did not deem success worth having without some little effort on the part of the quarry. Higher and higher in the air soared the hat, and louder and louder in the street grew the vociferations, now augmented and swelled into a chorus by the voices of some half-dozen astonished though much amused pedestrians. Presently there came a series of tremendous bangs on the front door, and I heard my parents' voices raised in vehement altercation with some stranger.

And she had to surrender her trophy.

In spite of one of Gilbert's Bab Ballads even such precocity as that just recounted fell far short of what was possible to children of nursery age 250 years ago when Thoresby is surprised at Garroway's Coffee House to see

A SICKLY child of three years fill its pipe of tobacco and smoke it . . . after that a second and a third pipe without the least concern as it is said to have done about a year ago.

Recollections of the Nursery would be incomplete without some mention of Nursery Rhymes which the child, over centuries, has begun to absorb and repeat before it could read them in any book. By word of mouth these rhymes have been handed down to us, and wise parents have resisted all efforts to expel them from the nursery, though it seems that such efforts began long ago. In the year 1841 J. O. Halliwell (Phillipps) published the first edition of his *Nursery Rhymes of England* with a preface which included these interesting comments

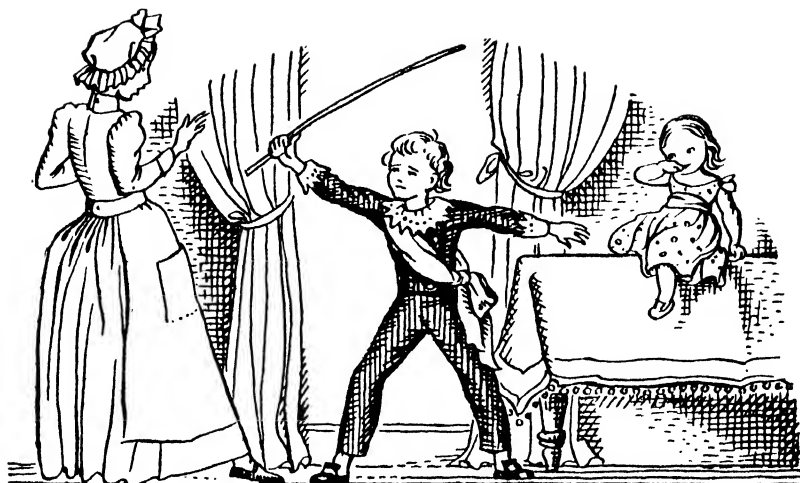
VERY few nursery rhymes can be traced back even as far as the 16th century but there is a peculiar style in most of the ancient ones that

could not very well be imitated without detection by a practised ear. Many of the most popular rhymes are merely fragments of old ballads . . . The whole subject is a most curious one and it would perhaps occasion some difficulty to the most ingenious theorist to form a conjecture that would account for the universal dissemination of these strange scraps, through several centuries.

He goes on to complain that in America particularly there was a movement in favour of teaching children some "form of popular science" instead of the rhymes but

I CANNOT help thinking that harmless and euphonious nonsense may reasonably be considered a more useful instrument in the hands of children than that over straining of the intellect very early which must unavoidably be the result. . . .





CHAPTER III

Early Memories

How far memories of nursery days are reliable is sometimes a matter for doubt. There is on record the case of a personage who remembered lying in his cradle, seeing his nurse take a "swig" from a brandy bottle and thinking 'I shall tell my mama of this when I'm old enough to speak.' It was believed however that this story was intended to carry to an absurdity the claims of that great Victorian statesman, W. E. Gladstone, to very early memories. At least it was told in his hearing and, after consideration, dismissed as "Impossible."

Gladstone himself, who was born at the end of 1809, used to say that he could remember a visit paid by George Canning to Liverpool in October 1812 and of himself being set on a chair in the dining-room of his father's house in order that he might make the first of innumerable public speeches in the words "Ladies and Gentlemen." It is quite probable that, sixty or seventy years hence, old people will be relating memories of the present war, for war is often responsible for early recollections. Thus Harriet Martineau:

MY first political interest was the death of Nelson. I was then four years old. My father came in from the counting house at an unusual hour and told my mother who cried heartily. I certainly had some

conception of a battle and of a great man being a public loss . . . I had my own notions of Buonaparte too. One day, at dessert, when my father was talking anxiously to my mother about the expected invasion for which preparations were being made all along the Norfolk coast, I saw them exchange a glance, because I was standing staring, twitching my pinafore with terror. My father called me to him and took me on his knee and I said, "But, Papa, what will you do if Boney comes?"—"What will I do?" said he cheerfully, "why, I will ask him to take a glass of port with me." From the moment I knew that Boney was a creature who could take a glass of wine, I dreaded him no more.

The second Lord Malmesbury, afterwards Foreign Secretary, could remember something of the Napoleonic wars as they affected the nursery.

ALL this time the great war with Napoleon was raging by sea and land. Few . . . remember the excitement and resolution which pervaded the country. The name of Bonaparte was till 1815 the bugbear of English mothers and nurses to rule wayward children. His name was in everyone's mind and pronounced with execration. The country resounded with the arms of volunteers, yeomanry and militia. Every one of our naval successes and Spanish victories saw the Union Jack hoisted on the towers of the churches and the details, printed in our county newspapers, were read to shouting crowds in our market places. No wonder that such scenes made a deep impression on the minds of even very young boys as they did on mine and my brother's.

Another child born during the Napoleonic wars was Thomas Babington Macaulay, the historian, and his recollections seem to have gone back very far. His first two years were passed in a house in Birchin Lane in the City of London.

BABY as he was when he quitted it, he retained some impressions of his earliest home. He remembered standing up at the nursery window by his father's side, looking at a cloud of black smoke pouring out of a tall chimney. He asked if that was hell; an inquiry which was received with a grave displeasure which at the time he could not understand.

When the child was two years old the family moved to Clapham High Street

HERE the boy passed a quiet and most happy childhood. From the time that he was three years old he read incessantly, for the most part

lying on the rug before the fire with his book on the ground, and a piece of bread and butter in his hand. A very clever woman, who then lived in the house as parlour-maid, told how he used to sit in his nankeen frock, perched on the table by her as she was cleaning the plate and expounding to her out of a volume as big as himself. He did not care for toys, but was very fond of taking his walk when he would hold forth to his companion, whether nurse or mother, telling interminable stories out of his own head, or repeating what he had been reading in language far above his years. His memory retained without effort the phraseology of the book which he had been last engaged on, and he talked, as the maid said, 'quite printed words,' which produced an effect that appeared formal and often no doubt, exceedingly droll.

Hannah More, that pattern of all the proprieties, was fond of telling a story of a visit she made to Clapham where she was met by

A FAIR, pretty slight child with abundance of light hair, about four years of age, who told her that his parents were out, but that if she would be good enough to come in he would bring her a glass of old spirits.

Not unnaturally this offer startled the old lady considerably.

SHE had never aspired beyond cowslip wine. When questioned as to what he knew about old spirits, he could only say that Robinson Crusoe often had some.

Another child destined to fame as a writer who began his life in a street in the City of London was Daniel Defoe in Fore Street, "then 'a narrow, dirty busy lane' within the City 'liberties.'" Defoe, as she tells us, had an excellent mother. He used to say to her sometimes "If you vex me, I'll not eat my dinner," she "taught me to be wiser by letting me stay till I was hungry." Every now and then in his books are pictures of his early days. On Robinson Crusoe's Island for instance

IT proved of excellent advantage to me now, that when I was a boy I used to take great delight in standing at a Basket-Maker's in the town, where my father lived, to see them make their Wicker ware; and being, as boys usually are, very officious to help, and a great observer of the manner how they worked these things, and sometimes lending a hand, I had by these means full knowledge of the methods of it.

So too he makes his "Colonel Jack" the vehicle for early memories.

IN this way of talk I was always upon the Inquiry asking Questions of things done in Publick, as well as in Private; particularly I lov'd to talk with Seamen and Soldiers about the War, and about the great Sea Fights or Battles on Shore that many of them had been in, and as I never forgot anything they told me, I could soon, that is to say in a few years, give almost as good an Account of the Dutch War and of the Fights at Sea, the Battles in Flanders, the taking of Maestricht, and the like, as any of those who had been there; and this made those old Soldiers and Tars love to tell me all the Stories they could think of, and that not only of the Wars then going on, but also of the Wars of Oliver's time, the death of King Charles I and the like.

George Borrow, born in 1803, son of an officer in the West Norfolk Militia, was destined to an early wandering existence with his father's regiment in the days when invasion was expected. He too wove into his books recollections of his early childhood and although he disclaims, in "Lavengro," any "intention of drawing a portrait of myself in childhood," he does give us some sketches of early adventures

IT happened that my brother and myself were playing one evening in a sandy lane . . . our mother was at a slight distance. All of a sudden, a bright, yellow and, to my infantine eye, beautiful and glorious object made its appearance at the top of the bank from between the thick quickset, and, gliding down, began to move across the lane to the other side, like a line of golden light. Uttering a cry of pleasure, I sprang forward and seized it nearly by the middle. A strange sensation of numbing coldness seemed to pervade my whole arm, which surprised me the more as the object to the eye appeared so warm and sunlike. I did not drop it, however, but, holding it up, looked at it intently, as its head dangled about a foot from my hand. It made no resistance! I felt not even the slightest struggle! but now my brother began to scream and shriek like one possessed. 'Oh Mother, Mother,' said he, 'the viper, my brother has a viper in his hand!' He then, like one frantic, made an effort to snatch the creature away from me. The viper now hissed amain, and raised his head, in which her eyes, like hot coals, menacing, not myself, but my brother. I dropped my captive, for I saw my mother running towards me, and the reptile, after standing for a moment nearly erect, and still hissing furiously, made off, and disappeared. The whole scene is now before me, as vividly as if it occurred yesterday—the gorgeous viper, my poor, dear

frantic brother, my agitated parent, and the frightened hen clucking under the bushes; and yet I was not three years old.

When Samuel Johnson was only thirty months old he was taken up to London to be "touched" by Queen Anne.

JOHNSON used to talk of this very frankly and Mrs. Piozzi has preserved his very picturesque description of the scene as it remained upon his fancy. Being asked if he could remember Queen Anne—"He had," he said, 'a confused but somehow a sort of solemn recollection of a lady in diamonds, and a long black hood.'

That he noticed things early is clear from a story Boswell had from a Lichfield correspondent.

WHEN Dr. Sacheverell was at Lichfield Johnson was not quite three years old. My grandfather Hammond observed him at the Cathedral perched upon his father's shoulders, listening and gaping at the much celebrated preacher. Mr. Hammond asked Mr. Johnson how he could possibly think of bringing such an infant to church, and in the midst of so great a crowd. He answered, because it was impossible to keep him at home; for, young as he was, he believed he had caught the public zeal for Sacheverell and would have stayed for ever in the church, satisfied with beholding him.

Of his independence of character he himself remembered a story told by his mother. He was sent early to school and a servant was sent to bring him home owing to his extreme near-sightedness. One day the maid did not come and he set out alone but his school mistress, afraid of an accident, followed him at a distance. Sensing her care for him he felt it "as an insult to his manliness, ran back to her in a rage and beat her as well as his strength would permit."

That John Wesley's chief memory of early life should have been an exciting adventure seems appropriate enough. He was six years old when Epworth Parsonage caught fire in the night. His father had rescued the other children but found that access to the nursery by the stairs was no longer possible and "kneeled down in the hall, and recommended the soul of the child to God." John thus described what happened

I BELIEVE it was just at that time I waked for I did not cry as they imagined, unless it was afterwards. I remember all the circumstances

as distinctly as though it were but yesterday. Seeing the room was very light, I called to the maid to take me up. But none answering, I put my head out of the curtains and saw streaks of fire on the top of the room. I got up and ran to the door but could get no farther, all the floor beyond it being in a blaze. I then climbed up on a chest which stood near the window; one in the yard saw me and proposed running to fetch a ladder. Another answered, 'There will be no time, but I have thought of another expedient. Here I will fix myself against the wall; lift a light man, and set him on my shoulders.' They did so and he took me out of the window. Just then the whole roof fell in, but it fell inward or we had all been crushed at once. When they brought me into the house where my father was he cried out, 'Come neighbours! let us kneel down, let us give thanks to God. He has given me all my eight children; let the house go. I am rich enough!'

Walter Scott's earliest memories include what he calls "The odd remedies recurred to to aid my lameness."

SOMEONE had recommended that so often as a sheep was killed for the use of the family, I should be stripped, and swathed up in the skin, warm as it was flayed from the carcase of the animal. In this Tartar-like habiliment I well remember lying upon the floor of the little parlour in the farm house, while my grandfather, a venerable old man with white hair, used every excitement to make me try to crawl. I also distinctly remember the late Sir George MacDougal of Makerstoun . . . joining in this kindly attempt. He was . . . a relation of ours and I still recollect him in his old fashioned military habit (he had been Colonel of the Greys) with a small cocked hat, deeply laced, and embroidered scarlet waistcoat and a light coloured coat, with milk white locks tied in the military fashion, kneeling on the ground before me, and dragging his watch along the carpet to induce me to follow it. The benevolent old soldier and the infant wrapped in his sheepskin would have afforded an odd group to uninterested spectators.

Coleridge declared of himself

ALAS I had all the simplicity, all the docility of a little child, but none of the child's habits. I never thought as a child, never had the language of a child.

But he tells us that so deeply impressed upon his mind are the scenes of his childhood that he can never close his eyes in the sun without

seeing afresh the waters of the Otter, its willowy banks, the plank that crossed it and the sand of varied tints that lay in its bed.

Visions of Childhood! oft have ye beguiled
Lone Manhood's cares, yet waking fondest sighs;
Ah! that once more I were a careless Child!

That the child is father of the man is brought out strongly in early memories of Charles Stewart Parnell. Of his childhood, his family preserved various characteristic anecdotes. One of them concerns his early fondness for playing with toy soldiers and the great battles he fought with his sister Fanny. For instance, there is preserved some record of one stricken field

FOR several days the war continued without apparent advantage being gained on either side. One morning, however, heavy cannonading was heard in the furthest corner of the room (produced by rolling a spiked ball across the floor). Pickets were called in, and in three minutes from the firing of the first shot, there was a general engagement all along the line. Strange as it may seem, Fanny's soldiers fell by the score and hundreds, while those commanded by her brother refused to waver even when palpably hit. This went on for some time until Fanny's army was utterly annihilated. It was learned from his own confession, an hour after the Waterloo, that Charles had glued his soldiers' feet securely to the floor.

A family story, certainly not less characteristic, tells how

as a little boy he showed that consideration for all things helpless and weak, whether human beings or animals, for which he was distinguished in after years. One day he thought his nurse was too severe with his sister Anna. Anna was placed in a room to be punished. Charles got into the room, put Anna on a table, rolled the table into a corner, and standing in front of it with a big stick kept the nurse at bay.

Among women writers Harriet Martineau, a favourite author with the mid-Victorians, could carry back her recollections a very long way. We have seen something already of her memories of the invasion threat; here are some of the more domestic kind.

I REMEMBER standing on a threshold of a cottage, holding fast by the door post and putting my foot down in repeated attempts to reach the ground. Having accomplished the step, I toddled (I remember the

uncertain feeling) to a tree before the door, and tried to clasp and get round it; but the rough bark hurt my hands. At night of the same day, in bed, I was disconcerted by the coarse feel of the sheets, so much less smooth and cold than those at home; and I was alarmed by the creaking of the bedstead when I moved. It was a turn up bedstead in a cottage of a small farm house where I was sent for my health, being a delicate child. . . .

Sometimes the dim light of the windows in the night seemed to advance till it pressed upon my eyeballs, and then the windows would seem to recede to an infinite distance. If I laid my hand under my head on the pillow, the hand seemed to vanish almost to a point, while the head grew as big as a mountain. Sometimes I was panic-struck at the head of the stairs and was sure I could never get down. I could never cross the yard to the garden without flying and panting and fearing to look behind because a wild beast was after me. The starlight sky was the worst, it was always coming down to stifle and crush me.

For early memories of Shelley there are a few records in family letters. Hogg wrote of him that "as a boy he was gentle, affectionate, intelligent, amiable, ever loving and universally loved." Helen Shelley wrote that he was "full of a peculiar kind of pranks" and also that at six years old he was sent daily to learn Latin at a clergyman's house. At the age of ten he was sent to Sion House, Brentford, where his master was a "hardheaded Scotchman of rather liberal opinions." Ruskin's earliest memories of 54 Hunter Street, Bloomsbury, were unusual enough; the windows

MOST fortunately for me commanded a view of a marvellous iron post out of which the water carts were filled through beautiful little trap doors by pipes like boa constrictors; and I was never weary of contemplating this mystery and the delicious drippings consequent.

It was to music that Browning was most keenly susceptible in early childhood. One day his mother was playing in the twilight

SHE was startled to hear a sound behind her. Glancing round, she beheld a little white figure . . . and could just discern two large wistful eyes looking earnestly at her. The next moment the child had sprung into her arms, sobbing passionately at he knew not what, but, as his paroxysm of emotion subsided, whispering over and over with urgency—"Play! Play!"



CHAPTER IV

Nurse-Nana-Nanny

At all times, no doubt, a good deal of sentiment has hung about the nurse's profession and many families to this day count among their dearest possessions an old nurse who has seen two or more generations through the first difficult years of life. But at the same time every period of history must have had its difficulties with old nurses, stiff in the joints, stiff in temper, "difficult" with the servants, "trying" with the family, too apt to fancy neglect, too exacting, prone to inconvenient recollections. Not for nothing did Shakespeare give us the Nurse in "Romeo and Juliet" and there have been mothers enough since then to echo Lady Capulet's "Enough of this. I pray thee hold thy peace"—probably with as little useful effect.

That the old family nurse could be something of a trial is made clear in the next century by the mentions of Nan Fudd, nurse in the Verney family at Claydon. In the difficult days for Royalists Nan Fudd seems to have been a problem

HERE (writes Lady Verney) have been many Complaynts from your sisters of Nan Fudd how she neaver did helpe any one of your sisters and that she sayes you left her onely to look to my boy Jack and how that she thinks you are bounde eyther to keepe her or provide for

her as long as she lives for thatt she knowed it was your Mother's intention it should be soe.

Later on there are hints of "Fudd's plot" to make herself indispensable. And there is another nurse, Nurse Curzon, in another branch of the family who is

OLD, crazy and decayed and hath more neede to have one to look to her than to look after others.

But nurses just then may have been at a premium, for it is remarked that they are "much dearer than ever they were."

If "Nanny" (though to some of us the word belonged exclusively to a feminine goat and we talked of "Nurse" or "Nana") was occasionally difficult and exacting and inconveniently reminiscent in her old age, the balance was certainly on the other side, both in fact and in fiction. In my own family our nurse went elsewhere as the last of us passed into a school and my memories of her are rather of fairness and justice than of affection. She must have come to us young, and I think of her as rather pale with reddish hair; but if this suggested a hot temper, she kept it well under control. She had no favourites and treated us all alike. She never carried tales and as long as petty delinquencies could be paid for with a spanking, she did not carry them to a higher court. I think we were happy under her rule and I hope that her memories of us were not too odious. There must have been a succession of nursery maids, young things inclined, no doubt, to sympathise with us in our misdeeds; but of them my memory retains nothing.

Fact and fiction (fiction founded, no doubt, on fact) give us some notable portraits of nurses. There was John Ruskin's Anne, for instance, "my father's nurse and mine."

FROM her girlhood to her old age the entire ability of her life was given to serving us. She had a natural gift and speciality for doing disagreeable things, above all the service of a sick room, so that she was never quite in her glory unless some of us were ill. She also had some parallel speciality for saying disagreeable things, and might be relied upon to give the extremely darkest view on any subject before proceeding to ameliorative actions upon it.

And she had a very creditable and republican aversion to doing immediately or in set terms as she was bid; so that when my mother

and she got old together and my mother became very imperative and particular about having her tea-cup set on one side of her little round table, Anne would observantly and punctiliously put it always on the other which caused my mother to state to me every morning after breakfast gravely that if ever a woman in this world were possessed by the devil, it was that woman.

But in spite of this momentary and petulant aspiration to liberty and independence of character, poor Anne remained very servile in soul all her days and was altogether occupied from the age of fifteen to seventy-two in doing other people's wants instead of her own and seeking other people's good instead of her own. Nor did I ever know on any occasion of her doing harm to a human being except by saving two hundred and odd pounds for her relatives, in consequence of which some of them, after her funeral, did not speak to the rest for several months.

"And seeking other people's good instead of her own"—there surely is the history of innumerable good nurses.

But when Sir Walter Scott was writing the Autobiographical sketch which is prefixed to Lockhart's "Life," he had a very different anecdote to relate of his own experience. As a very small child he was sent into the country in the hope of getting the better of his lameness.

It seems my mother had sent a maid to take charge of me, that I might be no inconvenience in the family. But the damsel sent on that important mission had left her heart behind her, in the keeping of some wild fellow, it is likely, who had done and said more to her than he was like to make good. She became extremely desirous to return to Edinburgh, and as my mother made a point of her remaining where she was, she contracted a sort of hatred at poor me, as the cause of her being detained at Sandy-Knowe. This rose, I suppose, to a sort of delirious affection, for she confessed to old Alison Wilson, the house-keeper, that she had carried me up to the Craigs, meaning, under a strong temptation of the devil, to cut my throat with her scissors, and bury me in the moss. Alison instantly took possession of my person, and took care that her confidante should not be subject to any farther temptation, so far as I was concerned. She was dismissed, of course, and I have heard became afterwards a lunatic.

Almost the finest of all tributes to nurses was that paid by Robert Louis Stevenson to Alison Cunningham—"Cummie"—who came to him when he was eighteen months old.

MY ill health principally chronicles itself by the terrible long nights that I lay awake, troubled continually with a hacking, exhausting cough, and praying for sleep or morning from the bottom of my shaken little body. I principally connect these nights, however, with our third house in Heriot Row; and cannot mention them without a grateful testimony for the unwearied sympathy and long suffering displayed to me on a hundred such occasions by my good nurse. It seems to me that I should have died if I had been left there alone to cough and weary in the darkness. How well I remember her lifting me out of bed, carrying me to the window, and showing me one or two lit windows up in Queen Street across the dark belt of gardens; where also, we told each other, there might be sick little boys and their nurses waiting, like us, for the morning. My recollections of the long nights when I was kept awake by coughing are only relieved by the thought of the tenderness of my nurse and second mother (for my first will not be jealous) Alison Cunningham. She was more patient than I can suppose of an angel; hours together she would help and console me . . .

She was to play her part in the forming of his character too.

In many cases it is the relation, generally an aunt, to whom the credit of watching over the earliest years of genius belongs. Thus Gibbon in his autobiography:

TO preserve and to rear so frail a being the most tender assiduity was scarcely sufficient; and my mother's attention was somewhat diverted by her frequent pregnancies, by an exclusive passion for her husband, and by the dissipation of the world in which his taste and authority obliged her to mingle. But the maternal office was supplied by my aunt, Mrs. Catherine Porten; at whose name I feel a tear of gratitude trickling down my cheek. A life of celibacy transferred her vacant affection to her sister's first child, my weakness excited her pity; her attachment was fortified by labour and success, and if there be any, as I trust there are some, who rejoice that I live, to that dear and excellent woman they must hold themselves indebted. Many anxious and solitary days did she consume in the patient trial of every mode of relief and amusement. Many wakeful nights did she sit by my bedside in trembling expectation that each hour would be my last.

And when at the age of twenty-one he landed in England after an absence of nearly five years, "the only person in England whom I was impatient to see was my Aunt Porten, the affectionate guardian of my

tender years. I hastened to her house in College Street, Westminster; and the evening was spent in the effusions of joy and confidence."

Wordsworth long remembered with gratitude the kindness of one who was no relation. At the age of nine he was sent to Hawkshead Grammar School of which De Quincey tells us

THE mode of living out of school very much resembled that of Eton for Oppidans; less elegant, no doubt, and less costly in its provision for accommodation but not less comfortable, and in that part of the arrangements which was chiefly Etonian, even more so, for in both places the boys, instead of being gathered into one fold, and at night into one or two huge dormitories, were distributed amongst motherly old 'dames,' technically so called at Eton but not at Hawkshead.

In the latter place, agreeably to the inferior scale of the whole establishment, the houses were smaller, and more cottage-like, consequently more like private households; and the old lady of the ménage was more constantly amongst them, providing, with maternal tenderness and with a professional pride, for the comfort of her young flock, and protecting the weak from oppression. The humble cares to which these poor matrons dedicated themselves may be collected from several allusions scattered through the poems of Wordsworth. . . . Indeed not only the moderate rank of the boys and the peculiar kind of relation assumed by these matrons equally suggested this humble class of motherly attentions, but the whole spirit of the place and neighbourhood was favourable to an old English homeliness of domestic and personal economy.

In the poem Wordsworth called "Nutting" written in 1800 is a reference to his own particular "dame."

It seems a day
 (I speak of one from many singled out)
 One of those heavenly days that cannot die;
 When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,
 I left our cottage-threshold, sallying forth
 With a huge wallet o'er my shoulder slung,
 A nutting-crook in hand; and turned my steps
 Towards some far distant wood, a figure quaint,
 Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds
 Which for that service had been husbanded,
 By exhortation of my frugal dame . . .

With Charles Lamb we return to a nurse who was also a relation, Sarah Lamb, "Aunt Hetty." Charles himself wrote of her

I HAD an Aunt, a dear and good one. She was one whom single blessedness had soured to the world. She often used to say that I was the only thing in it which she loved; and when she thought I was quitting it, she grieved over me with mother's tears . . . With some little asperities in her constitution, which I have above hinted at, she was a steadfast friendly being and a fine old Christian.

And in 1797 Lamb wrote to Coleridge

MY poor old Aunt, whom you have seen, the kindest, goodest creature to me when I was at school; who used to toddle there to bring me fag, when I, school boy like, only despised her for it, and used to be ashamed to see her come and sit herself down on the old coal hole steps as you went into the old Grammar School, and open her apron and bring out her bason, with some nice thing she had caused to be saved for me;—the good old creature is now lying on her death bed. I cannot bear to think on her deplorable state. . . . She says, poor thing, she is glad to come home to die with me. I was always her favourite.

No after friendship e'er can raise
The endearments of our early days,
Nor e'er the heart such fondness prove
As when it first began to love.

We have heard already of Walter Scott's unfortunate experience in babyhood with a nursemaid who went mad; but afterwards he too had reason to be grateful for the loving care of an aunt of whom he writes

MY kind and affectionate Aunt, Miss Janet Scott, whose memory will ever be dear to me, although such a journey (to Bath to try the effect of the waters on his lameness) promised to a person of her retired habits anything but pleasure or amusement, undertook as readily to accompany me to the wells of Bladud, as if she had expected all the delight that ever the prospect of a watering place held out to its most impatient visitants.

Possibly also she was somewhat perturbed by his behaviour when at about four years old he was taken to see "As You Like It."

AND the witchery of the whole scene is alive in my mind at this moment. I made, I believe, noise more than enough, and remember being so much

scandalised at the quarrel between Orlando and his brother in the first scene, that I screamed out 'A'n't they brothers?'

However he tells us that his aunt, "though of a higher temper" than his grandmother, "was exceedingly attached to me." When he was eight years old he was for some weeks at Prestonpans "still under my aunt's protection."

I do not remember whether Thomas Hood had any basis in fact for his dolorous ballad of the "Careless Nurse Mayd" but I use it as a stepping stone between fact and fiction

I saw a Mayd sitte on a Bank,
 Beguil'd by Wooer fayne and fond;
 And whiles His falteryng Vowes she drank,
 Her Nurselynge slipt within a Pond!

All Even Tide they Talkde and Kist,
 For She was fayre and He was Kinde;
 The Sunne went down before She wist
 Another Sonne had sett behinde!

With angrie hands and frownyng Browe,
 That deem'd Her owne the Urchine's Sinne,
 She pluckt Him out, but he was now
 Past being Whipt for fallynge in.

She then beginnes to wayle the Ladde
 With Shrikes that Echo answered round—
 O foolishe Mayd to be so sadde
 The Momente that her Care was drown'd.

There will be differences of opinion about nurses in fiction but most of us read and re-read with pleasure the scene in "The Newcomes" in which the Colonel tells his brother and his nephew that he is going down to Newcome to see a relation.

'DID you ever hear of Sarah Mason?' said the Colonel.

'Really I never did,' the Baronet answered.

'Sarah Mason? No, upon my word, I don't think I ever did,' said the young man.

'Well, that's a pity too,' the Colonel said with a sneer. 'Mrs.

Mason is a relation of yours—at least by marriage. She is my aunt or cousin—I used to call her aunt, and she and my father and mother all worked in the same mill at Newcome together.’

‘I remember—God bless my soul—I remember now,’ cries the Baronet. ‘We pay her forty pound a year on your account—I recollect the name quite well but I thought she had been your nurse and—and an old servant of my father’s.’

‘So she was my nurse, and an old servant of my father’s,’ answered the Colonel. ‘But she was my mother’s cousin too; and very lucky was my mother to have such a servant, or to have a servant at all. There is not in the whole world a more faithful creature or a better woman.’

And so in due course Colonel Newcome and his son arrive at the town of Newcome and

THEIR dinner over, away went the Colonel and Clive guided by the ostler . . . to the humble little tenement which Thomas Newcome’s earliest friend inhabited. The good old woman put her spectacles into her Bible, and flung herself into her boy’s arms—her boy who was more than fifty years old. She embraced Clive still more eagerly and frequently than she kissed his father. She did not know the Colonel had grown whiskers. Clive was the very picture of the dear boy as he had left her almost two score years ago. And as fondly as she hung on the boy her memory had ever clung round that early time when they were together. The good soul told endless tales of her darling’s childhood, his frolic and beauty.

Mr. Dombey, on the other hand, would have thought all this weakness. There was the case of Polly “Richards,” for instance, whom he refused to recognise by her lawful name of Toodle. Mrs. Toodle ventured to suggest that “Perhaps if she was to be called out of her name, it would be considered in the wages.”

‘OH, of course,’ said Mr. Dombey. ‘I desire to make it a question of wages altogether. Now, Richards, if you nurse my bereaved child, I wish you to remember this always. You will receive a liberal stipend in return for the discharge of certain duties, in the performance of which I wish you to see as little of your family as possible. When those duties cease to be required and rendered and the stipend ceases to be paid, there is an end of all relations between us. Do you understand me? . . . You have children of your own. It is not at all in this

bargain that you need become attached to my child, or that my child need become attached to you. I don't expect or desire anything of the kind. Quite the reverse. When you go away from here, you will have concluded what is a mere matter of bargain and sale, hiring and letting; and will stay away. The child will cease to remember you and you will cease, if you please, to remember the child.'

The arrangement came, as we know, to a disastrous end and

SOOTH to say, poor Paul had better reason for his tears than sons of that age often have, for he had lost his second mother—his first, so far as he knew—by a stroke as sudden as that natural affliction which had darkened the beginning of his life. At the same blow, his sister too, who cried herself to sleep so mournfully, had lost as good and true a friend. But that is quite beside the question. Let us waste no words about it.

That sister had a nurse-maid of her own

A SHORT, brown, womanly girl of fourteen with a little snub nose and black eyes like jet beads . . . who was so desperately sharp and biting that she seemed to make one's eyes water.

She is introduced to us as "Spitfire, whose real name was Susan Nipper," and Susan Nipper decides to "live friendly, Mrs. Richards, while Master Paul continues a permanency, if the means can be planned out without going openly against orders." However when disaster came and Polly Toodle was dismissed, Mr. Dombey decided that "the other nurse, the young person, being so much younger and necessarily influenced by Paul's nurse, may remain." Then there was Paul's second nurse

MRS. WICKAM was a waiter's wife which would seem equivalent to being any other man's widow, whose application for an engagement in Mr. Dombey's service had been favourably considered, on account of the apparent impossibility of her having any followers, or anyone to follow; and who from within a day or two of Paul's sharp weaning, had been engaged as his nurse. Mrs. Wickam was a meek woman, of a fair complexion, with her eyebrows always elevated, and her head always drooping; who was always ready to pity herself, or to be pitied, or to pity anyone else; and who had a surprising natural gift of viewing all subjects in an utterly forlorn and pitiable light, and bringing dreadful

precedents to bear upon them and deriving the greatest consolations from the exercise of that talent.

Later on when Mrs. Pipchin had taken general command of Paul's life Susan Nipper took the place of Mrs. Wickam and was now "a smart young woman."

TO many a single combat with Mrs. Pipchin did Miss Nipper gallantly devote herself; and if ever Mrs. Pipchin in all her life had found her match, she had found it now. Miss Nipper threw away the scabbard the first morning she arose in Mrs. Pipchin's house. She asked and gave no quarter. She said it must be war, and war it was; and Mrs. Pipchin lived from that time in the midst of surprises, harassings, and defiances, and skirmishing attacks that came bouncing in upon her from the passage, even in unguarded moments of chops, and carried desolation to her very toast.

The Nurse in "Jane Eyre" was Bessie Lee and Bessie provided Jane with some of her few hours of happiness at Gateshead Hall

LONG did the hours seem while I (alone in the nursery) waited the departure of the company, and listened for the sound of Bessie's steps on the stairs; sometimes she would come up in the interval to seek her thimble or her scissors, or perhaps to bring me something by way of supper—a bun or a cheesecake—then she would sit on the bed while I ate it, and when I had finished, she would tuck the clothes round me, and twice she kissed me, and said 'Good-night, Miss Jane.' When thus gentle, Bessie seemed to me the best, prettiest, kindest being in the world; and I wished most intensely that she would always be so pleasant and amiable, and never push me about, or scold, or task me unreasonably, as she was too often wont to do. Bessie Lee must, I think, have been a girl of good natural capacity, for she was smart in all she did, and had a remarkable knack of narrative; so, at least, I judge from the impression made on me by her nursery tales. She was pretty, too, if my recollections of her face and person are correct. I remember her as a slim young woman, with black hair, dark eyes, very nice features, and good, clear complexion; but she had a capricious and hasty temper, and indifferent ideas of principle or justice . . .

Unlike Bessie Lee, Peggotty was something more than a nurse in the Copperfield household.

THE first objects that assume a distinct presence before me, as I look far back, into the blank of my infancy, are my mother with her pretty

hair and youthful shape, and Peggotty, with no shape at all, and eyes so dark that they seemed to darken their whole neighbourhood in her face, and cheeks and arms so hard and red that I wondered the birds didn't peck her in preference to apples . . . I have an impression on my mind which I cannot distinguish from actual remembrance, of the touch of Peggotty's fore finger as she used to hold it out to me, and of its being roughened by needlework like a pocket nutmeg grater. . . . We were both a little afraid of Peggotty and submitted ourselves in most things to her direction . . .

Here, then, are some of the nurses of fact and fiction; but since we are writing of Childhood, ought not a special place be given to that old nurse who, in the unhappy childhood of Anthony Ashley-Cooper, the good Lord Shaftesbury, champion of all ill-used children, taught him the religion which was the mainspring of his career and the prayer which he never failed to offer every night of his life—the old nurse who left him for keepsake the gold watch which he wore till his death, saying “That was given to me by the best friend I ever had in the world?”





CHAPTER V

Reading (With or) Without Tears

READING writing and arithmetic have always been the beginning of education and reading has been taught traditionally at the mother's knee. No doubt the old Horn Book provided some of the earliest instruction. This word was applied originally to a sheet containing the letters of the alphabet. It was mounted on wood and covered with transparent horn, the wooden frame being provided with a handle which was hung from the child's girdle. Among other things the Horn Book contained the alphabet in large and small letters. Vowels in combination with the consonants followed and the Lord's Prayer was given at length, the whole often concluded with the Roman numerals.

When books came into common use primers were substituted, the most famous of which in my own recollection was called "Reading Without Tears." This book may be said without malice to have produced more tears than any known to history. It was E. F. Benson, for instance, who remarked to his mother that it was tears without reading. At the same time all that we know of the first stages of education suggests that little is to be deduced from the power of

mastering quickly or otherwise the art of reading. Two extreme cases are suggested by Samuel Johnson and Oliver Goldsmith. We read that as a child in petticoats Johnson not only read the collect of the day but got it by heart in a few minutes.

On the other hand we read on the authority of Elizabeth Delap, who taught Goldsmith his letters, that "never was so dull a boy; he seemed impenetrably stupid."

Roger North gives us this picture of learning to read three hundred years ago as taught by his mother.

AND for the part of learning to read and bringing us to it at sett hours, leaving the Intervals to Remission, which is absolutely necessary in Yonglings and making all possible Impressions in the way of Religion by discoursing and answering wisely, when wee were talkative, and to show how Vertue may be mixed with Delight, she used to tell us Tales, allways concluding in Morality, to which, as Children used, wee were most attentive.

Of the good little girl educated at home the mother of that formidable lady Hannah Letitia Barbauld, who was born in 1743, wrote

I ONCE indeed knew a little girl who was as eager to learn as her instructors could be to teach her, and who at two years old, could read sentences and little stories in her wise book, roundly, without spelling, and in half a year more could read as well as most women; but I never knew such another, and I believe never shall.

Mrs. Barbauld's biographer goes on to tell us

HER education was entirely domestic, and principally conducted by her excellent mother, a lady whose manners were polished by the early introduction to good company which her family connections had procured her; whilst her mind had been cultivated and her principles formed partly by the instruction of religious and enlightened parents. . . . In the middle of the last century a strong prejudice still existed against imparting to females any tincture of classical learning; and the father of Mrs. Barbauld, proud as he justly was of her uncommon capacity, long refused to gratify her earnest desire of being initiated in this kind of knowledge. At length, however, she in some degree overcame his scruples; and with his assistance she enabled herself to read

the Latin authors with pleasure and advantage; nor did she rest satisfied without gaining some acquaintance with the Greek.

But it was Mrs. Barbauld who proclaimed that "the best way for a woman to acquire knowledge was from conversation with father or brother or friend." And in support of her father's doubts about Latin it may be remarked that Hannah More was not taught mathematics which were not considered proper for a female, and her father, after teaching her Latin, became alarmed at the rapidity of her progress. "These were the days," it was said, "when a reputation for learning was almost as detrimental to a woman's social prospects as the accusation of witchcraft."

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who was born in 1689, was fortunate in being turned loose as a child in a well stocked library where, to some extent, she educated herself. For a professional Bluestocking she had nothing but contempt, but she deplored the lack of interest of most parents of her day in the education of their girls.

WE are educated in the grossest ignorance and no art is omitted to stifle our natural reason; if some few get above their nurses' instructions, our knowledge must be concealed and be as useless to the world as gold in a mine.

When she became a grandmother she wrote from time to time to her daughter on the subject.

PEOPLE commonly educate their children as they build their houses, according to some plan they think beautiful, without considering whether it is suited to the purposes for which they are designed. Almost all girls of quality are educated as if they were to be great ladies, which is often as little to be expected as an immoderate heat of the sun in the north of Scotland. You should teach yours to confine their desires to probabilities, to be as useful as is possible to themselves, and to think privacy (as it is) the happiest state of life.

How interesting to compare this plan of life for children whose mother was Countess of Bute with that of Hannah More for the poor children in whose education she was a pioneer! In essentials the aim is identical.

MY plan for instructing the poor is very limited and very strict. They learn of weekdays such coarse works as may fit them for servants.

I allow of no writing. My object has not been to teach dogmas and opinions, but to form the lower class to habits of industry and virtue.

To return to Lady Mary, she does not go any distance along the path of equal education for boys and girls.

IF your daughters are inclined to love reading do not check their inclinations by hindering them of the diverting part of it; it is as necessary for the amusement of women as the reputation of men; but teach them not to expect or desire any applause from it. Let their brothers shine, and let them content themselves with making their lives easier by it, which I experimentally know is more effectually done by study than any other way. Ignorance is as much the fountain of vice as idleness, and indeed generally produces it. People that do not read, or work for a livelihood, have many hours they know not how to employ; especially women, who commonly fall into vapours, or something worse.

And here she gives some rather more detailed advice for one of her grand-daughters.

I AM particularly pleased to hear she is a good arithmetician; it is the best proof of understanding: the knowledge of numbers is one of the chief distinctions between us and the brutes. . . . Learning, if she has a real taste for it, will not only make her contented, but happy in it. No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting. She will not want new fashions, nor regret the loss of expensive diversions, or variety of company, if she can be amused with an author in her closet. To render this amusement extensive she should be permitted to learn the languages. I have heard it lamented that boys lose so many years in mere learning of words: this is no objection to a girl whose time is not so precious: she cannot advance herself in any profession, and has therefore more hours to spare; and as you say her memory is good, she will be very agreeably employed in this way. There are two cautions to be given on this subject: first, not to think herself learned when she can read Latin or even Greek. Languages ought more properly to be called vehicles of learning than learning itself. . . . True knowledge consists in learning things and not words. . . . The second caution to be given her (and which is most absolutely necessary) is to conceal what ever learning she attains with as much solicitude as she would hide crookedness or lameness; the parade of it can only serve to draw on her the envy, and consequently the most

inveterate hatred, of all he and she fools which will certainly be at least three parts in four of all her acquaintances. The use of knowledge in our sex, beside the amusement of solitude, is to moderate the passions and learn to be contented with a small expense, which are the certain effects of a studious life; and it may be preferable even to that fame which men have engrossed to themselves and will not suffer us to share.

Famous people it may be repeated give us a variety of results in regard to first steps. George Eliot, we are told, learned to read, with some difficulty; she is described as an awkward girl reserved and serious far beyond her years though observant. R. L. Stevenson was not naturally fond of reading, result perhaps of having his mother and "Cummie" to read to him, so that he was eight years old before he found any pleasure in reading.

A VISIT to the country and an experience unforgettable. The day had been warm; Henrietta and I had played together charmingly all day in the sandy wilderness across the road; then came the evening, with a great flash of colour and a heavenly sweetness in the air. Somehow my playmate had vanished, or is out of the story, as the sagas say, but I was sent into the village on an errand; and, taking a book of fairy tales, went down alone through a fir wood, reading as I walked. How often since then has it befallen me to be happy even so; but that was the first time; the shock of that pleasure I have never since forgot and if my mind serves to the last, I shall never; for it was then that I knew that I loved reading.

On the other hand Edward Gibbon wrote of himself

AS soon as the use of speech had prepared my infant mind for the admission of knowledge, I was taught the arts of reading, writing, and arithmetic. So remote is the date, so vague is the memory of their origin in myself, that, were not the error corrected by analogy I should be tempted to conceive as innate. In my childhood I was praised for the readiness with which I could multiply and divide, by memory alone, two sums of several figures; such praise encouraged my growing talent; and had I persevered in this line of application, I might have acquired some fame in mathematical studies.

We have seen already that Harriet Martineau learnt her letters from cards "where each letter had its picture" and she says of herself: "My

mind, considered dull and unobservant and unwieldy by my family, was desperately methodical." Charles James Fox had no difficulty in learning anything. In after years it was written of him

Born a disputant, a sophist bred,
His nurse he silenced and his tutor led.

His father wrote of him at the age of five as "very well, very pert, very argumentative." At this time he was mad about the stage and reading every play on which he could lay hands. Walter Scott went to Bath for the waters in his fourth year and he records that

DURING my residence at Bath, I acquired the rudiments of reading at a day school, kept by an old dame near our lodgings, and I had never a more regular teacher, although I think I did not attend her a quarter of a year. An occasional lesson from my aunt supplied the rest. Afterwards, when grown a big boy, I had a few lessons from Mr. Stalker of Edinburgh and finally from the Rev. Mr. Cleeve. But I never acquired a just pronounciation, nor could I read with much propriety.

Robert Browning may be said to have been bred in a library.

OF his children's company (his father) never tired, even when they were scarce out of babyhood. He was fond of taking the little Robert in his arms, and walking to and fro with him in the dusk in the library, soothing the child to sleep by singing to him snatches of Anacreon in the original to a favourite old tune of his 'A Cottage in a Wood.' Readers of 'Asolando' will remember the allusion in that volume to 'my father who was a scholar and knew Greek.'

Ruskin says of his learning to read

I ABSOLUTELY declined to learn to read by syllables but would get an entire volume by heart with great facility and point with accuracy to every word on the page as I repeated it. As however when the words were once displaced I had no more to say, my mother gave up for the time the endeavour to teach me to read, hoping only that I might consent in process of years to adopt the popular system of syllabic study. But I went on to amuse myself in my own way, learnt whole words at a time as I did patterns, and at five years old was sending for my 'second volumes' to the circulating library.

Thomas Hardy, like Browning, was much affected in childhood by music.

THOUGH healthy he was fragile and precocious to a degree, being able to read almost before he could walk and to tune a violin when of quite tender years. He was of ecstatic temperament, extraordinarily sensitive to music, and among the endless jigs, hornpipes, reels, waltzes and country dances that his father played of an evening in his early married years and to which the boy danced a *pas seul* in the middle of the room, there were three or four that always moved the child to tears though he strenuously tried to hide them. . . . He used to say in after years that like Calantha in Ford's 'Broken Heart,' he danced at these times to conceal his weeping. He was not over four years of age at this day.

Girls had their earliest education made rigorous enough in some families. Here for instance is Mrs. Sherwood's account of her education by her mother.

IT was the fashion then for children to wear iron collars round the neck with a back-board strapped over the shoulders; to one of these I was subjected from my sixth to my thirteenth year. It was put on in the morning and seldom taken off till late in the evening and I generally did all my lessons standing in stocks with this stiff collar round my neck. At the same time I had the plainest possible food such as dry bread and cold milk; I never sat on a chair in my mother's presence. Yet I was a very happy child and when relieved from my collar I not unseldom manifested my delight by starting from our hall door and taking a run of at least half a mile through the wood which adjoined our pleasure grounds.

And the author of "The Fairchild Family" adds that under this discipline she learned more quickly than her brother.

But with the nineteenth century milder methods seemed to be creeping in. The poems of Jane and Ann Taylor have some hints in this direction and attempts are made to help mothers to encourage their babies to read.

HERE'S a pretty gay book, full of verses to sing;
But Lucy can't read it. Oh what a sad thing!
And such funny stories and pictures too—Look
I'm glad I can read such a beautiful book.

But come, little Lucy, then, what do you say?
 Shall I begin teaching you pretty great A?
 And then all the letters that stand in the row
 That you may be able to read it, you know.

A great many children have no good mama
 To teach them to read, and poor children they are,
 But Lucy shall learn all her letters to tell
 And I hope by and by she will read very well.

In a school book published in 1806 are some hints to reading

IT is a pleas-ant thing to learn to read. If you would read well you must first read slow. Ev-ery mark you see be-tween the words is a pause or stop where you may take breath. Some child-ren by not mind-ing these al-ways read ill and spoil the sense. If it is worth while to read at all it is right to try to read well. You should ne-ver hurr-y o-ver any word with-out mak-ing it out right. If you do not know it, try to spell it and ask the per-son who is teach-ing you to tell you how to div-ide it. You will sel-dom take your breath but where there is a pause and if you try to do this you will much soon-er make out the sense of what you read.

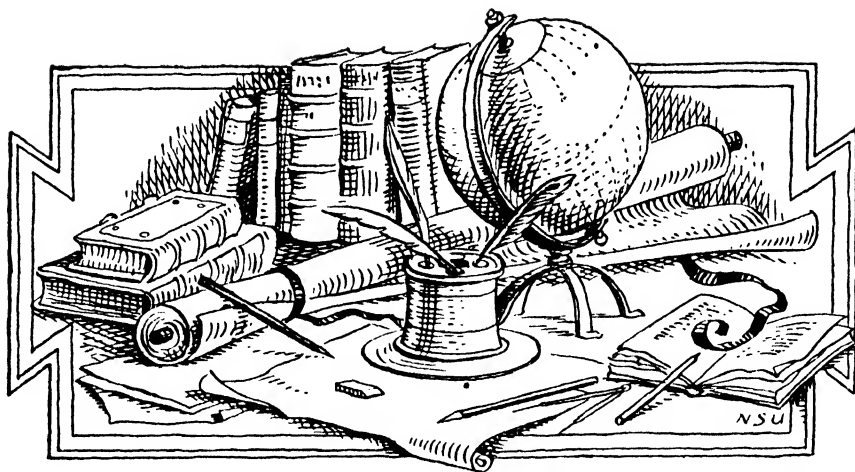
Less usefully perhaps but more pleasantly on the ears of childhood would fall such encouragement as this

I don't know my letters and what shall I do?
 For I've got a nice book but I can't read it through;
 Oh dear, how I wish that my letters I knew!

I think I had better begin them today
 For 'tis little advance to be always at play;
 Mama, will you read little Baby great A?

And the B and the C as they stand in the row
 One after another as far as they go,
 For then I can read my new story, you know.

So pray, Mama, teach me at once and you'll see
 What a very good child little Baby shall be
 To try and remember her A, B, C, D.



CHAPTER VI

The Schoolroom

AND now we pass from the nursery to the schoolroom, often the same room with a few ominous changes, inkpots on the table, probably a map of the world on the wall, and school books beginning to outnumber the old favourites. Nurse is displaced by governess, and if there is anything she is not prepared to teach there may be visits (less often now than in the past) from music master and drawing masters and expeditions to dancing classes.

The drawing master sometimes brought complications with him as in the case of Mr. Smee, introduced to the Osbornes by their governess, Miss Wirt. Mr. Smee's visits (and Miss Wirt's employment) came to an abrupt end when old Mr. Osborne, returning earlier than usual from the City, found

THE painter, the pupil and the companion . . . turned the former out of doors with menaces that he would break every bone in his skin, and half an hour afterwards, dismissed Miss Wirt likewise, kicking her trunks down the stairs, trampling on her band boxes and shaking his fist at her hackney coach as it bore her away.

Becky Sharp's career as a governess was short but we read that SHE did not pester young brains with too much learning but, on the

contrary, let them have their own way selves.

Charlotte Brontë had had bitter experience herself as when one cousin said to her "I love 'ee" in the presence of his mother and was rebuked with "Love the *governess* my dear?" Perhaps one of her letters of 1839 will suffice

THE children are constantly with me and more riotous, perverse, unmanageable cubs never grew. As for correcting them, I quickly found that was out of the question; they are to do as they like. A complaint to Mrs. Sidgwick only brings black looks on myself and unjust partial excuses to screen the children.

Jane Eyre had to listen to such a conversation as this

'you should hear Mama on the chapter of governesses; Mary and I have had, I should think, a dozen at least in our day; half of them detestable and the rest ridiculous, and all incubi—were they not, Mama?'—'My dearest, don't mention governesses; the word makes me nervous. I have suffered a martyrdom from their incompetency and caprice; I thank Heaven I have now done with them.'

And there followed detailed accounts of the miseries inflicted on governesses by their pupils.

It would be tedious to follow the unfortunate tribe of governesses through the novels of a couple of centuries. But here are some details in real life a hundred years ago from the *Reminiscences of Georgiana, Lady Bloomfield*.

THE governess I had then (1831) was a clever woman but a very odious one and when she left she persuaded all my family to subscribe to a work she said she was about to publish on education in which she gave an account of us all, turning us into ridicule; and the character she gave me was that I promised to be 'an undutiful child, a turbulent wife, a despotic mother and a tyrannical mistress!'

My own sisters had English, French, Swiss and German governesses at different times and for longer or shorter periods; I do not think they were unhappy except (especially with the Swiss) through home sickness. I doubt whether any of them were trained in any modern sense, but what was demanded of governesses fifty years ago was that

they should be "ladylike," that they should be able to teach the elements and that they should be trustworthy. The foreigners were expected to provide their pupils with good accents in their native languages.

But there had been a period when French governesses, especially, were suspect in some families. Everyone knows (or ought to know) how, in "East Lynne," Lady Isabel returned as governess to her own children under the disguise of "Madame Vine" which made a neighbouring Justice of the Peace suspicious.

BEG pardon but I heard there was a French madame coming here. . . . I shouldn't have taken you for English, if you had not told me; but I'm glad to hear it. No good ever came of a French governess in one's house. . . . When our girls were young my wife must needs have . . . a French governess. 'She'll turn us all into Papists,' said I, 'and require frogs to be served up for her dinner. . . .'

Of incompatible temperaments as between governesses and their charges a "Highland Lady" (Elizabeth Grant of Rothiemurcus) has left eloquent testimonial. She and her sisters were provided with a governess when she was about fourteen.

WE girls found the schoolroom life very irksome at first, it was so different from what we had been accustomed to. . . . Governess and pupils slept in one large room at the top of the . . . house. We had each of us a little white curtained bed, made to fit into the slope of the roof in its own corner, leaving space enough between the bedstead and the end wall for the washing table. The middle of the room with its windows, fireplace, toilettes and book table made one common dressing room.

Miss Elphick began her course of instruction by jumping out of bed at six in the morning and throwing on her clothes with the haste of one escaping from a house on fire. She then wiped her face and hands and smoothed her cropped hair and her toilet was over. She considered ten minutes quite sufficient for any young lady to give to her toilet on week days; we could clean ourselves properly, as she did, on Sundays.

We must have an hour at the harp or pianoforte before breakfast and as our papa chose we should be out for another we must give ourselves a good wash on Sundays. . . .

We were ungovernable, I daresay, but she was totally unfit to direct us and thus when we saw from the windows of our schoolroom, a perfect prison to us, the fine summer pass away, no wonder we rebelled and detested our unfortunate governess.

But it was not always a governess who presided over the schoolroom. Ruskin, for instance, was grounded by his mother though neither, in retrospect, thought the experiment quite successful. His considered opinion

ON the general tenor of my education at that time must be that it was at once too formal and too luxurious, leaving my character, at the most important point for its construction, cramped indeed but not disciplined and merely by protection innocent instead of by practice virtuous. My mother saw that herself, and but too clearly in later years; and whenever I did anything wrong, stupid or hard-hearted (and I have done many things that were all three) always said: 'It is because you were too much indulged.'

Those poetesses of caution for childhood, Jane and Ann Taylor, were never for too much indulgence.

WELL, now I will sit down and work very fast,
And try if I can't be a good girl at last;
Tis better than being so sulky and haughty;
I'm really quite tired of being so naughty.

For, as mother says, when my business is done
There's plenty of time left to play and to run,
But when tis my work time, I ought to sit still,
I know that I ought and I certainly will.

I'm sorry I've idled so often before,
But I hope I shall never do so any more;
Mama will be pleased when she sees how I mend,
And have done this long seam from beginning to end.

To some extent an aunt, Miss Branwell, acted as governess to the Brontë girls after the death of their mother, but, apart from sewing and what Mrs. Gaskell called household arts, it was their father who presided over the schoolroom. Here is his own account

WHEN my children were very young, when, as far as I can remember, the oldest was about ten years of age, and the youngest about four,

thinking that they knew more than I had yet discovered, in order to make them speak with less timidity, I deemed that if they were put under a sort of cover I might gain my end; and happening to have a mask in the house, I told them all to stand and speak boldly from under cover of the mask. I began with the youngest (Anne) and asked what a child like her most wanted; she answered, 'Age and experience.' I asked the next (Emily) what I had best do with her brother Branwell, who was sometimes a naughty boy; she answered, 'Reason with him, and when he won't listen to reason, whip him.' I asked Branwell what was the best way of knowing the difference between the intellect of man and woman; he answered, 'By considering the difference between them as to their bodies.' I then asked Charlotte what was the best book in the world; she answered, 'The Book of Nature.' I then asked the next what was the best mode of education for a woman; she answered, 'That which would make her rule her house well.' Lastly, I asked the eldest what was the best mode of spending time; she answered, 'By laying it out in preparation for a happy eternity.' I may not have given precisely their words, but I have nearly done so, as they made a deep and lasting impression on my memory. The substance, however, was exactly what I have stated.

The Brontës were a very exceptional family and it may be that Mrs. Henry Wood gives us a more normal picture of the best results of "the schoolroom" and its teaching in her novel "Mildred Arkell." Here at least is her description of her heroine.

SHE was a quiet, sensible, ladylike girl, with a gentle face and the sweetest look possible in her soft brown eyes. She had not been educated fashionably, according to the custom of the present day; had never been to school; but had received, as we are told of Moses Primrose, a "sort of miscellaneous education at home." She possessed a thorough knowledge of her own language, knew a good deal of Latin, insensibly acquired through being with Peter when he took his earlier lessons from his father, read aloud beautifully, wrote an excellent letter, and was a quick arithmetician, made shirts and pastry to perfection and was well read in our best authors. Not a single accomplishment, except dancing, had she been taught; and yet she was in mind and manners essentially a gentlewoman.

Reference to the best authors suggests to me that girls were often better read than boys if they had been brought up at home. Over and

over again, at least, we find references to girls being allowed the freedom of their father's libraries though I remember in our own family certain locked cases.

Tutors seem to have been essential for boys in good families. They were often (as nowadays) young men fresh from the University and not yet decided on a career, while family chaplains would act also as tutors. Among the papers of Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's minister, is a report from Henry Dowes, tutor to the Minister's son, Gregory.

AFTER that it pleased your mastership to give me in charge, not only to give diligent attendance upon Master Gregory, but also to instruct him with good letters, honest manners, pastyme of instruments, and such other qualities as should be for him meet and convenient, pleaseth it you to understand that for the accomplishment thereof I have endeavoured myself by all ways possible to excogitate how I might most profit him. In which behalf, through his diligence, the success is such as I trust shall be to your good contentation and pleasure, and to his no small profit.

But for cause the summer was spent in the service of the wild gods, and it is so much to be regarded after what fashion youth is brought up, in which time that that is learned for the most part will not be wholly forgotten in the older years, I think it my duty to ascertain your mastership how he spendeth his time. And first after he hath heard mass he taketh a lecture of a dialogue of Erasmus' Colloquies, called 'Pietas Puerilis' wherein is described a very picture of one that should be virtuously brought up; and for cause it is so necessary for him, I do not only cause him to read it over, but also to practise the precepts of the same. After this he exerciseth his hand in writing one or two hours, and readeth upon Fabyan's "Chronicle" as long. . . .

In February 1639 Lady Barrymore writes to Sir Ralph Verney

to aske the favour of you to rite to my noble governour to find a good tutor for my young master. I would have him a mounsheer, one that might teach him to rite and a good garb, and that might still be with him when I send him to school. I would not have him too ould or too young but one of a very temperate carriage. For his wages I refer it holey to him for what he agrees for I will God willing see paid.

Tutors in all ages sometimes turned out badly and we hear of a French tutor having to be discharged "for his Drinking and Lying and trying to infect his pupils with the poison of French doctrine."

Sometimes in the troublous times of the Commonwealth Royalists put their children in French families and we read that £200 a year will suffice for this purpose.

THEY will keepe him a footboy, and procure him an able man that shall bee his Tutor both in Greeke and Latin and also pay for all his other exercises, as Mathematicks, Dancing, Fencing, Riding, Musick and Language Master, and finde him good Cloathes of all sorts, gloves, ribbons, etc., and pocket money also in a reasonable way . . . Bookes, paper, instruments, both for Musick and the Mathematics, and further in case he should bee sick, they will provide Doctor, Apothecary and a keeper.

Mr. Shandy devoted years of thought and talk to what he called his Tristra-paedia and eventually produced some conclusions about a desirable tutor for his son.

THE governor I make choice of shall neither lisp, or squint, or wink, or talk loud, or look fierce, or foolish;—or bite his lips, or grind his teeth, or speak through the nose, or pick it, or blow it with his fingers.—He shall neither walk fast, or slow, or fold his arms,—for that is laziness;—or hang them down,—for that is folly; or hide them in his pocket, for that is nonsense—He shall neither strike, or pinch, or tickle,—or bite, or cut his nails, or hawk, or spit, or snift, or drum with his feet or fingers in company. . . . I will have him, continued my father, cheerful, facete, jovial, at the same time, prudent, attentive to business, vigilant, acute, argute, inventive, quick in resolving doubts and speculative questions;—he shall be wise, and judicious and learned;—and why not humble, and moderate, and gentle tempered, and good? said Yorick;—and why not, cried my Uncle Toby, free and generous and bountiful and brave? He shall, my dear Toby, replied my father, getting up and shaking him by the hand.

Does anyone read “Sandford and Merton” nowadays? There is at least a touch of modernity in some of the methods of the Rev. Mr. Barlow who undertook the tutoring of Tommy Merton, the rich man’s son and Harry Sandford, the farmer’s son. His first lesson has a very practical flavour for, after breakfast, he goes at once into the garden, takes a spade and gives Harry Sandford a hoe and the two set to work. To Tommy he says

now, Tommy, if you choose to join us, I will mark you out a piece of ground which you shall have to yourself and all the produce shall be your own.—‘No indeed,’ says Tommy, very sulkily, ‘I am a gentleman and don’t choose to slave like a ploughboy.’—‘Just as you please, Mr. Gentleman,’ said Mr. Barlow, ‘but Harry and I who are not above being useful, will mind our work.’ In about two hours, Mr. Barlow said it was time to leave off, and, taking Harry by the hand, he led him into a very pleasant summer house where they sat down, and Mr. Barlow, taking out a plate of very fine ripe cherries, divided them between Harry and himself. Tommy, who had followed, and expected his share, when he saw them both eating without taking any notice of him, could no longer restrain his passion and burst into a violent fit of sobbing and crying.

And so Mr. Barlow proceeded with his lessons in the articles of self-help and democratic virtues.

That infant prodigy John Stuart Mill had his father for tutor and it may be guessed that his reading cost him few tears.

I HAVE no remembrance of the time when I began to learn Greek. I have been told that it was when I was three years old. My earliest recollection on the subject is that of committing to memory what my father called ‘vocables,’ being notes of common Greek words with their significance in English which he wrote out for me on cards. Of grammar, until some years later, I learnt no more than the inflexions of the nouns and verbs, but after a course of vocables, proceeded at once to translation, and I faintly remember going through Aesop’s Fables, the first Greek book which I read. I learnt no Latin till my eighth year. At that time I had read under my father’s tuition a number of Greek prose authors . . . I also read (still in his eighth year) the first six Dialogues of Plato—the last Dialogue, I venture to think, would have been better omitted, as it was totally impossible I should understand it.

Yet another infant prodigy was Samuel Parr, famous afterwards as one of the least pleasant of pedagogues but a fine Latin scholar. Born in 1747, we read of him

SUCH (it is said) were the displays of intellectual progress exhibited by him in almost infantile age on every subject to which his attention could be directed as to call forth the loud and lavish praises of all who witnessed them. Placed upon a chair or, still more conspicuously, upon

a table, surrounded by a listening audience of friends, he was accustomed to repeat passages from authors or from the suggestions of his own mind, to reply to questions proposed with a propriety and a spirit which in a child none could forbear to applaud and not seldom, perhaps, inconsiderately and extravagantly. To this circumstance some who knew him well have not hesitated to trace as its first spring that excess of vanity and self-complacency though, a real foible even in a great character, has too often been magnified unfairly and exposed ungenerously to public ridicule or reproach.





CHAPTER VII

Sunday at Home

IT is not to my purpose to argue how far the present generation may have deserted the old rule which made Sunday a day set aside in family life, and it may be that, after the war, this is one of the things in which we shall see a return to older manners. What is not in doubt is the importance through centuries of religion in the life of children and of Sunday as the central point of that religion. And if we find that the restraints of Sunday—and especially the evangelical Sunday—were sometimes hard to bear, it is only fair to remember also that what was sometimes irksome to the children was a real rest to the heads of families. Sir Thomas More would say to his daughters “To provoke” them “to the desire of Heavenly things”

IT is now no mastery for you children to go to Heaven. For everybody giveth you good example. You see virtue rewarded and vice punished, so that you are carried up to Heaven even by the chins. But if you live in the time that no man will give you good counsel nor no man will give you good example, when you shall see virtue punished and vice rewarded, if you will then stand fast and firmly stick to God upon pain of life, if you will be but half good, God will allow you for whole good.

And that is a saying very worthy of remembrance in these days. The days which More envisaged lie far away perhaps in the history of this

country, and a writer at the beginning of this century declared "Whatever of Sunday is not occupied with exercise, is given to meals" but this refers only to a small minority. It happens that my own family stood mid-way between Evangelical gloom and week-end neglect, and so perhaps I may recall some memories of Sunday in my childhood, that is to say mid-way in the eighteen eighties.¹

OURS, I suppose, was a fairly typical family of the professional class of that period. My mother was sincerely religious but with the reserve held proper in that class and of that period. We were not encouraged in any exhibitionism and adolescent attacks of acute anxiety about our spiritual well-being were treated with firmness and Gregory powder. The girls of the family were not encouraged to offer their services beyond church decoration; the rector came to dinner at long intervals and it was understood that a sufficiently handsome envelope was placed in the plate on Easter Sunday.

But there was no nonsense about Sunday morning service; I do not think that as a child I ever entered a church on Sunday evening in holidays. Evening services were supposed to be intended for the servants, and although it was never suggested that the servants might be a little embarrassed if we attended church in the evening (as though spying on them to see whether they really did go) there may have been some sub-conscious Victorian delicacy in the matter. We were not "twicers" then, but we were invariably "oncners." It was never worth while in our family to plead a Sunday morning headache; illnesses simply were not admitted as things which might begin on a Sunday morning.

Since we lived five minutes walk from church, it followed inevitably that we were always late . . . with two parents and five children we must have made a procession as we entered at about "sundry places" pre-occupied in my own case with hopes that nothing would happen to give me one of those nervous fits of the giggles which beset me too often on solemn occasions. No one admitted then that these attacks were nervous; they were just "that child." Nothing was said about them afterwards but the look that quelled them at the time penetrated one's inmost consciousness. In those days there were none of those short cuts which seem common nowadays. We had the Litany at full length and the Commandments at full length, and the rector was the dullest of preachers so that it really was something of an achievement for a

¹ From an article in the *Manchester Guardian*.

small child to behave with decorum till that blessed moment when through the opened door he felt the breeze and saw the branches tossing.

No games were allowed on Sunday and, if there was no actual prohibition of secular reading, certain books were preferred and these gave us no excuse for complaint. Our nerves were proof against the horrors of the illustrations to Foxe's "Book of Martyrs" and there was "Pilgrim's Progress." But between tea and bed-time (or the cold supper which was supposed to leave the servants free to go to church) my happiest memories are concerned with the solving of Scriptural acrostics from a Sunday paper, my mother presiding with Cruden's Concordance.

So that in spite of uncomfortable clothes and the way Sunday afternoons in summer had of being particularly fine while tennis court and croquet lawn were forbidden, Sundays left no such unhappy memories as, for instance with Tom Paine, "Friend of Mankind," or Henry Crabb Robinson. Tom Paine, son of a Quaker, came early under the influence of an aunt who had him confirmed at Thetford Church and made him listen to sermons. He mentions one "On the Redemption by the death of the Son of God."

AFTER the sermon was ended, as I was going down the garden steps, I revolted at the recollection of what I had heard and thought to myself that it was making God Almighty act like a passionate man, that killed his son, when he could not revenge himself any other way, and as I was sure a man would be hanged that did such a thing I could not see for what purpose they preached such sermons. This was not one of those kind of thoughts that had anything in it of childish levity; it was to me a serious reflection, arising from the idea I had that God was too good to do such an action, and also too almighty to be under any necessity of doing it. I believe . . . that any system of religion that has anything in it that shocks the mind of a child, cannot be a true system.

Crabb Robinson, writing a little later, at the end of the 18th century notes that

THE suffering I recollect was the restraint imposed on me on Sundays, especially being forced to go twice to Meeting; an injurious practice, I am satisfied. To be forced to sit still for two hours, not understanding a word, was a grievance too hard to be borne. I was not allowed to look at a picture book but was condemned to sit with my hands before

me or stand, according to the service. The consequence was that I was often sent to bed without my supper for bad behaviour at Meeting. . . . Once I recollect being whipped by my mother for being naughty at Meeting, a sad preparation for a religious life.

He was not alone in this particular misfortune. Half a century later a future Lord Redesdale had a somewhat similar experience which he recalled in his "Memories." He was staying at that time with his grandmother.

SUNDAYS inside our house were dreary and penitential. My grandmother, a Leslie-Anstruther by birth, had inherited all the bigotry of the old Covenanters, and under her rule, kind and loving as it was on week days, the Sabbath was a day on which no expression of joy was permitted. Many hours were consumed by her in various forms of dull worship. Even we mere babies had to sit through a service which was made as forbidding as it could be. She began with the morning service read from beginning to end, including the priestly Absolution; then came the Litany which the professional cleric omits when the Morning Prayer has been given in its entirety; then the Communion Service. By that time most performers would have been exhausted; not so my grand-mother, for she proceeded to deliver one of Blair's Sermons and woe be to us if we yawned or fidgeted or were guilty of inattention.

I remember one special Sunday; I must have been about six years old when I was promoted to a pair of trousers. They were made by the village tailor out of a hideous black and white check horse cloth, very coarse and prickly like the hair shirt of a medieval saint. Every time I moved the sharp points entered into my tender flesh; to kneel was a penance, to get up agony and to sit down a torture. My fidgets and groans could not be restrained; they were a criminal interruption and I was punished accordingly. But at any rate in order that the punishment should be effectual, the cruel trousers had to be taken down and that was a consolation though only temporary and not unmixed with counter-irritation of pain. In these circumstances religion was what the great Lord Halifax called a vertu stuck with bristles, too rigid for the age.

It is to be feared that mixed motives entered into the praise of Sunday by Lady Anne Barnard in "The Lives of the Lindsays."

ONE whole day which I may call happy was Sunday; on it we enjoyed the privilege of doing no manner of work save getting by rote twelve

verses of a Psalm which we repeated to our tutor before breakfast and in which I was always defeated unless I said my lesson immediately I had learned it. We then walked to church two miles distant and listened with reverence to all we understood. . . . We then went to dinner at which we all appeared and after it received my father's Sunday bounty—the eleven heaps of sweet-meats of all sorts and shapes piled up by one of us according to my mother's orders to teach us to calculate well; the compiler having the best heap to ensure justice being properly administered in the distribution . . .

Then follows the reason for the popularity of Sunday, compared with weekdays.

ALAS, our house was not merely a school of acquirements, it was often a sort of little Bastille in every closet of which was to be found a culprit; some were sobbing and repeating verbs; others eating their bread and water; some preparing themselves to be whipped and here and there a fat little Cupid who, having been flogged by Venus, was enjoying a most enviable nap.

But now we have done with these rather gruesome scenes. Harriet Martineau began her religious life early, when she was put out to nurse at a cottage where the nurse and her husband were "Methodists or melancholy Calvinists of some sort."

THE family story about me was that I came home the absurdest little preacher of my years (between two and three) that ever was. I used to nod my head emphatically and say "never ky for tyfles," "dooty fust, and pleasure afterwards," and so forth; and I sometimes got courage to edge up to strangers, and ask them to give me "a maxim." Almost before I could join letters I got some sheets of paper, and folded them into a little square book, and wrote, in double lines, two or three on a page, my beloved maxims. . . . The religion was of a bad sort enough . . . but I doubt whether I could have got through without it.

A very few years later she could say

I WAS getting some comfort however from religion by this time. The Sundays began to be marked days and pleasantly marked on the whole.

Later again when she was about seven a new influence came into her life in the person of "good Mr. Turner of Newcastle, my mother's pastor and friend before her marriage."

AT Newcastle, we usually went to tea at his house on Sunday evening; and it was then that we began the excellent practice of writing recollections of one of the sermons of the day. When the Minister preaches what children can understand, this practice is of the highest use in fixing their attention and in disclosing to their parents the character and imperfections of their ideas on the most important class of subjects. On occasion of our first attempt I felt very triumphant beforehand. I remembered the text; and it seemed to me that my head was full of thoughts from the sermon. I scrawled over the whole of a large slate, and was not a little mortified when I found that all I had written came into seven or eight lines of my mother's handwriting.

Probably what we are told of Sunday in the Fairchild family represents Evangelical ideas about the beginning of the 19th century.

AT dinner Mr. Fairchild would not allow his family to talk about any of the business of the week days or even to talk of the neighbours; they found enough pleasant discourse in speaking of what they had heard in church and of what had happened in the school: which of the children had improved and who said the Catechism best; who got rewards and such things. After dinner they all went again to church and in the winter they could not go in the evening because there was no service. So when they could not go to church, Mr. Fairchild was the clergyman and Henry the clerk and Mrs. Fairchild and Lucy and Emily and John, Betty and the two old women . . . who generally drank tea with Betty on a Sunday evening made up the congregation.

After Sunday service came tea and when tea was over the children were allowed to read any pretty Sunday book they had; and amongst them they had a great many. Before they went to bed Mr. Fairchild heard them read a few chapters of the Bible and repeat the Church catechism. They then all sang some hymns together and prayed and when they had done this and had their baked apples or, if it was summer time, perhaps some strawberries and cream or raspberries, the children went to bed.

It was the day, Mrs. Sherwood tells us, which the children loved best in the week.

Macaulay found the Evangelical Sunday something of a strain, as his sister wrote

THE Sundays were in some respects trying days to him. My father's habit was to read a long sermon to us all in the afternoon and again

after evening service another long sermon was read at prayer time for the servants. Our doors were open to sons of relations or friends; and cousins who were medical students or clerks in merchants' houses, came in regularly to partake of our Sunday dinner and sermons. Sunday walking, for walking's sake, was never allowed; and even going to a distant church was discouraged.

But Macaulay thought that Thackeray introduced too much of the Dissenting element into his picture of Clapham in the opening chapters of "The Newcomes." As for instance

ON a Sunday (which good old Saxon word was scarcely known at the Hermitage) the household marched away in separate couples or groups to at least half a dozen of religious edifices, each to sit under his or her favourite minister, the only man who went to church being Thomas Newcome, accompanied by Tommy, his little son, and Sarah his nurse . . . Tommy was taught hymns, very soon after he could speak, appropriate to his tender age, pointing out to him the inevitable fate of wicked children and giving him the earliest possible warning and description of the punishment of little sinners. He repeated these poems to his step-mother after dinner, before a great shining mahogany table, covered with grapes, pine-apples, plum cake, port wine, and Madeira and surrounded by stout men in black, with baggy white neck cloths, who took the little man between their knees, and questioned him as to his right understanding of the place whither naughty boys were bound.

So far we have said nothing about Sunday schools. It is true that the future of the schools seems to justify some anxiety, but more than a century and a half has gone by since Robert Raikes put into practice an idea first tried out in the early 17th century on the Continent. The influence of the Sunday-school on the religious life of the community has been very great. Perhaps it was in Sunday schools that, south of Tweed, all classes met together for instruction at the same time and it was long an obligation of honour among young women of "the quality" to assist in teaching in Sunday schools. One measure of the importance of the Sunday school is to be found in the great crop of children's magazines to which they gave birth, though it is true that much of their contents seems unhealthy to our taste through their preoccupation with the subject of early death. It is fair to remember

that infant mortality a hundred years ago was much higher than it is to-day. But again and again, as one turns the pages of these little magazines, measuring about five inches by three and a half inches and having such titles as "The Child's Magazine" or "The Child's Companion," one comes across such titles "Elizabeth's Dying Message to Her Sunday School," "The Sailor's Orphan Girl," "The Happy Death of John Russell Who had not Attained His Twelfth Year," together with stories of the "Lively Little Boy" who, hearing of "Paradise Lost," longed to have it, was allowed to read the poem but "A few weeks rolled round and this little boy sickened and died." "The Happy Death of a Little Child" is another heading and here is a sample of the verse to be found in them.

ON Friday morn not long ago,
Three healthy boys there were,
Together playing in the snow,
Void of both fear and care.

The eldest boy, next Sabbath day,
Was speechless, cold and dead;
The second too forsook his play,
Fell sick and went to bed.

Wednesday within the silent tomb
The eldest boy was laid;
And ere the parents reached their home,
The second son was dead.

The third now sickened, drooped and died—
The tale tho' sad is true—
A fever stopt life's flowing tide,
And snap't the thread in two.

But, mingled with this kind of thing and with stories of careless youths who went boating on Sunday and were inevitably drowned, there were many articles in these old magazines full of interesting information for children together with illustrated Bible stories and lessons.

I should like to conclude this survey of Sunday at home with two

descriptions of a happy Sunday. One comes from the life of Alexander Macmillan, the great early and mid-Victorian publisher.

SUNDAY was a cheerful day with us. My father had a special Sunday garb in the early days, a very brilliant scarlet coat and later on a brown velvet coat and cap which were very becoming to him and he came down with a peculiarly happy and serene expression. We always went in a body to church and after the usual long service of those days, we went for a long family walk and sat down to a family dinner at the rather unusual hour of three . . . Then began the specially social part of the day for there was nearly always someone who came from London in time for this meal . . . After the leisurely meal at which much talk went on, the afternoons were spent in the garden in summer and in winter divided between the library and the drawing room and we gathered round the dining-room table for tea. Some part of Sunday evening in those early days was given to reading aloud—the Bible or a sermon by Maurice or Kingsley, but very often poetry. After the arrival of our governess and friend, Miss Cassell, in 1864, music was often added. . . . These Sundays in the early days at Tooting were certainly most bright and happy days. There were no irksome restrictions, yet the happiness was of a quiet kind and tended to draw closer the ties of family friendship. We were not restricted in our reading to religious books, of which both parents had perhaps an overdose in their youth.

The other is from Osbert Sitwell's "Two Generations." It is an extract from the Journal of a girl in her nineteenth year in the spring of 1877.

YESTERDAY morning was our first Sunday in London. I love London Sundays. What hundreds of people in this great city are turning their faces the same way, thinking of the same things on Sunday! It makes me realise what is called in the Creed the Communion of Saints. And how nearer one feels to the poor toiling people to whom Sunday is essentially a day of rest and to all the people, rich or poor, who have the same hopes and are rejoicing with a kind of foretaste of the joys of Paradise.

So much for Sunday at home. But I must not give an impression that with Sunday religious life began and ended in the Victorian age. In the great majority of households, prayers were said before breakfast for family and servants. I shall not pretend that these did much to inculcate religious ideas since, as with morning chapel at school later

on, they were associated too often with a desperate rush to be ready in time, and to be late involved black looks and reprimands from the head of the household who might himself not be in a temper or frame of mind well suited to the occasion. But nothing was truer of the later Victorian family than that the real sense of religion was that learnt at "the mother's knee." As I have said my own mother was not much impressed by sudden spasms of enthusiasm but, for her, life was religion and religion was life. She lived the Christian life, humbly, believing everything she read in her Bible, always ready to discuss what to her was the most enthralling of true stories. She, like so many mothers of that day, was the true head and centre of our religious life; living with her, it was not difficult to believe as she believed.





CHAPTER VIII

Parents and Children

IN the history of the relations between parents and children I can remember no sadder page than that in which Lady Jane Grey, that tragic child whom the ambitions of others brought to the edge of the throne and to the scaffold, tells Roger Ascham why she minds her books when the others are hunting.

HER parents, the Duke and the Duchess (of Suffolk) with all the household, gentlemen and gentlewomen were hunting in the Park (at Bradgate). I found her in her chamber reading Plato's *Phaedo* in Greek and that with as much delight as some gentleman would read a merry tale in Boccaccio. After salutation and duty done, with some other talk, I asked her why she would leave such pastime in the Park; smiling she answered me: 'I wiz, all their sport in the Park is but a shadow to that pleasure that I find in Plato. Alas, good folk, they never felt what true pleasure meant.' 'And how came you, Madame,' quoth I, 'to this deep knowledge of pleasure and what did chiefly allure you on to it, seeing not many women, but very few men, have attained thereunto?' 'I will tell you,' quoth she, 'and tell you a truth which perchance you will marvel at.'

'One of the greatest benefits that ever God gave me is that he sent

me so sharp and severe parents and so gentle a school master. For when I am in presence either of father or mother, whether I speak, keep silence, sit, stand, or go, eat, drink, be merry, or sad, be sewing, playing, dancing, or doing any thing else, I must do it, as it were, in such weight, measure, and number, even so perfectly as God made the world, or else I am so sharply taunted, so cruelly threatened, yea presently sometimes with pinches, nips and bobs, and other ways which I will not name for the honour I bear them, so without measure misordered that I think myself in hell till time come that I must go to Mr. Elmer, who teacheth me so gently, so pleasantly, with such fair allurements to learning, that I think all the time nothing whiles I am with him. And when I am called from him, I fall on weeping because whatsoever I do else, but learning, is full of grief, trouble, fear, and whole misliking unto me.

‘And thus my book hath been so much my pleasure and bringeth daily to me more pleasure and more that, in respect of it, all other pleasures in very deed be but trifles and troubles unto me.’

And Ascham concludes this little story in the words:

I REMEMBER this talk gladly both because it is so worthy of memory and because also it was the last talk that ever I had and the last time that ever I saw that noble and worthy lady. I could be overlong both in showing just causes and in reciting true examples why learning should be taught rather by love than by fear . . . The good counsels of Solomon and Jesus the son of Sirach for sharp keeping in and bridling of youth are meant rather for fatherly corrections than masterly beating, rather for manners than for learning, for other places than for schools.

From such a picture it is a relief to turn to what, I suppose, is the wisest letter ever written by a father to his son. Philip Sidney, destined to immortal fame, was a boy at Shrewsbury when his father sent him a letter of advice and here are some extracts from it.

SINCE this is my first letter that ever I did write to you, I will not let it be empty of some advice which my natural care of you provoketh me to wish you to follow as documents to you in this your tender age.

Let your first action be the lifting up of your mind to Almighty God by hearty prayer and feelingly digest the words you speak in prayer with continual meditation on thinking of Him to whom you pray. And use this as an ordinary act and at an ordinary hour whereby the

time itself shall put you in remembrance of that you are accustomed to do in that time.

Be humble and obedient to your masters, for unless you frame yourself to obey others, yea and feel in your self what obedience is, you shall never be able to teach others how to obey you.

Use moderate diet so as after your meal you may find your wit fresher and not duller and your body more lively and not more heavy. Seldom drink wine and yet sometimes do; lest being enforced to drink upon the sudden you should find yourself enflamed. Give yourself to be merry for you degenerate from your Faith if you find not yourself most able in wit and body to do anything when you are most merry. But let your mirth be ever void of all scurrility and biting words to any man; for a wound given by word is oftentimes harder to be cured than that which is given by the sword.

Think upon every word that you will speak before you utter it and remember how Nature hath ramparted up, as it were, the tongue with teeth, lips, yea and hair without the lips and all betokening reins and bridles for the loose use of that member.

Above all things tell no untruth, no not in trifles . . . There cannot be a greater reproach to a gentleman than to be accounted a liar.

Francis Bacon noted that

THE illiberalitie of Parents in allowance towards their Children is an harmefull Errour; makes them base; acquaints them with Shifts; makes them sort with meane Company; and makes them surfeit more, when they come to Plenty . . . Men have a foolish manner in creating and breeding Emulation between Brothers during childhood, which many times sorteth to Discord, when they are men, and disturbeth families.

Roger North writes

WEE were taught to Reverence our father, whose care of us then (in childhood) consisted chiefly in the Gravity and decorum of his comportment, order and sobriety of life, whereby no Indecent or mischievous impressions took place with us from his example and when he deposed his temper and condescended to Entertain the little credulous Impertinents, it was with an agreeable as well as moral Effect, tending either to Instruct or Encourage what was good and to defie the Contrary, which is not onely a care but a skill in parents to doe, without Relucting the tender minds of children by the austerity of

commands and threats. The constant reward of Blessing, which was observed as sacred was a petit Regale in his closet, and that allwais came as a reward of what was to be encouraged, and denied when demerited; whereby it appears that great use may be made of that fondness which disposeth parents to gratifie children's little craving appetites, by doing it with an adjunct of precept, as a reward of obedience and vertue such as they are capable of, and at the same time being kind and tender in gratifying them.

The reference here to "Blessing" may be read in conjunction with Donne's Sermon on Genesis i. 26 . . . "children kneel to ask blessing of parents in England; but where else?"

Roper writes of Sir Thomas More's three daughters

IN virtue and learning brought up from their youth whom he would often entreat to take virtue and learning for their meat, and play but for their sauce.

On the side of indulgence, the first Lord Holland is often cited among bad fathers and no one could call his treatment of his sons, and especially of his beloved Charles,—the Charles James Fox of history—judicious. His maxims of parenthood were a jumble of sense and nonsense.

LET nothing be done to break Charles' spirit; the world will do that business fast enough—Young people are always in the right; old people in the wrong—Never do to-day what you can put off till to-morrow or ever do yourself what you can get others to do for you.

Never was a stranger mixture of the cynic and the sentimentalist. Now and then he judged rightly as when Lady Holland deplored Charles's violent temper. "Never mind," said the father, "he is a very sensible little fellow, and will learn to cure himself." But the most lenient of critics could find little to say in extenuation of the manner in which Holland introduced Charles and his brothers into the great world. Perhaps the anecdote which best sums up his attitude to the duties of a father is that which describes Charles's determination to take a watch to pieces. "Oh well, if you must, I suppose you must."

There is a curious foreboding of the future in a letter written by Charles's mother

I HAVE been this morning with Lady Hester Pitt and there is little William Pitt, not eight years old, and really the cleverest child I ever saw, and brought up so strictly and so proper in his behaviour that, mark my words, that little boy will be a thorn in Charles's side as long as he lives.

Probably Lady Hester was entitled to a good deal of the credit for her great son, for Chatham could not bear the noise of a nursery, even of the most decorous of nurseries.

THOUGH the most affectionate of fathers, he could not (at certain times in his career) bear to hear the voices of his own children and laid out great sums at Hayes in buying up houses contiguous to his own, merely that he might have no neighbours to disturb him with their noise.

Macaulay said that Charles Burney, the musician, and father of Fanny Burney, was "as bad a father as so good-hearted a man could possibly be." In 1777 Fanny finished "Evelina" and found a publisher named Lowndes who was willing to publish it.

BUT, before the bargain was finally struck, Fanny thought it her duty to obtain her father's consent. She told him that she had written a book, that she wished to have his permission to publish it anonymously, but that she hoped that he would not insist upon seeing it . . . It never seems to have crossed his mind that Fanny was about to take a step on which the whole happiness of her life might depend, a step that might raise her to an honourable eminence, or cover her with ridicule and contempt . . . On so grave an occasion, it was surely his duty to give his best counsel to his daughter, to win her confidence, to prevent her from exposing herself if her book were a bad one, and, if it were a good one, to see that the terms which she made with the publisher were likely to be beneficial to her. Instead of this, he only stared, burst out laughing, kissed her, gave her leave to do as she liked, and never even asked the name of her work. The contract with Lowndes was speedily concluded. Twenty pounds were given for the copyright and were accepted by Fanny with delight. Her father's inexcusable neglect of his duty happily caused her no worse evil than the loss of twelve or fifteen hundred pounds.

At least we may be sure that no young person of to-day is at all likely to take so modest a view of her own work or to need her father's advice.

There is no doubt that repression was a very general rule, however, in the treatment of children in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Macaulay himself, as his sister wrote,

WAS of opinion that the course pursued by his father towards him during his youth was not judicious. But here I am inclined to disagree with him. There was no want of proof of the estimation in which his father held him, corresponding with him from a very early age as with a man, conversing with him freely, and writing of him most fondly. But, in the desire to keep down any conceit, there was certainly in my father a great outward show of repression and depreciation . . .

In large families it was probably difficult to avoid rough and ready methods and the rule of Solomon was constantly invoked. It appears even in poetry for children. Here, for instance, is the sad story of "The Sash."

MAMA had ordered Ann, the maid,
Miss Caroline to wash
And put on with her clean white frock
Her handsome new silk sash.

But Caroline began to cry,
For what you cannot think,
She said, 'Oh, that's an ugly sash,
I'll have my pretty pink.'

Papa, who in the parlour heard
Her make this noise and rout,
That instant went to Caroline,
To whip her there's no doubt.

Frank Buckland was born in 1826 when his father was Canon of Christ Church, Oxford.

I AM told that, soon after my birth, my father and my god-father, the late Sir Francis Chantrey, weighed me in the kitchen scales against a leg of mutton and that I was heavier than the joint provided for the family dinner that day. In honour of my arrival my father and Sir Francis then went into the garden and planted a birch tree. I know the taste of the twigs of that birch tree well . . . One of my earliest offences in life was eating the end of a carriage candle. For this, the birch rod

not being handy, my father put me into a furze bush and there I did penance for ten minutes. A furze bush does not make a pleasant lounge when only very thin summer garments are worn.

Elizabeth Grant of Rothiemurcus describes how her father disposed of what she calls a milk rebellion in the nursery early in the nineteenth century. The rebellion came about through her failure to digest milk.

IN his dressing-gown with his whip in his hand he attended our breakfast. He began with me; my beseeching look was answered by a sharp cut followed by as many more as were necessary to empty the basin . . . We were flogged too for every error, boys and girls alike, but my father permitted no one to strike us but himself, my mother's occasional slaps and boxes on the ear were mere interjections taken no notice of.

What may be called perhaps the maiden aunt view is represented by Charlotte Yonge whose books were once so widely read. Addressing a meeting of mothers on "the parents' power" she declared

FROM the time of her joy that a man is born into the world this is one of the clearest of all bonds between mother and son. Surely it is sad when she wastes it and misses her chance of her best glory by treating her boy as a kind of irresponsible wild beast in his holidays to be simply indulged and permitted to tyrannise over the household . . . I have heard the parents of a very large family of different characters declare that instinctive obedience can be, as a general rule, learned by three-year-olds.

It has happened sometimes that parents have been dissatisfied because their daughters have seemed to show more energy than their sons. Mr. Tulliver, for instance, in "The Mill on the Floss," grumbled to his wife.

WHAT I'm afraid of is as Tom hasn't got the right sort o' brains for a smart fellow. I doubt he's a bit slowish. He takes after your family, Bessy . . . It seems a pity, though, as the lad should take after the mother's side instead o' the little wench . . . The little 'un takes after my side now; she's twice as cute as Tom. Too cute for a woman, I doubt. . . . It's no mischief much while she's a little 'un, but an over cute woman's no better nor a long tailed sheep—she'll fetch none the longer price.

Mrs. Tulliver took up the tale

“YES, it *is* a mischief while she’s a little ’un. Mr. Tulliver, for it all runs to naughtiness. How to keep her in clean pinafores two hours together passes my cunning.

Evidently Maggie Tulliver was not the model child of the early 19th century

COME, little girl and tell me what you did yesterday. ‘I came to school, read a lesson, worked at my needle and got some spelling. When I went home I waited on my mother, went on an errand and mended my pinafore.’

Mrs. Henry Wood makes one of her characters explain that the nurse should have all the trouble of the children

WHAT I trust I shall never give up to another will be the *training* of my children. Let the offices properly performed by a nurse be performed by the nurse. Let her have the *trouble* of the children, their noise, their romping . . . but I hope I shall never fail to gather my children round me daily at stated periods, for higher purposes; to instil into them Christian and moral duties; to strive to teach them how best to fulfil life’s obligations. This is a mother’s task . . . Let her do this work well and the nurse can attend to the rest. A child should never hear aught from its mother’s lips but winning gentleness; and this becomes impossible if she is very much with her children.

Writing in the eighteen eighties of “The good” Lord Shaftesbury’s terror of his parents, Shaftesbury’s biographer states that

OF all the social changes of the century perhaps there is none more remarkable than that which has come over the relationship of parents and children. It was once the almost universal practice to rule the children by severity and fear . .

Against this, the fateful year 1914 was ushered in by a leader writer in “The Times” with some reflections on the relations between fathers and children. Among which were these

PAPA has gone out and with him has gone that silly Mama and those rude children. Daddy is all that is indulgent and jolly. Mummy is a darling, so wise and gentle and discriminating. . . .

Failures of the past and failures of the present and future are due to the same cause. Papa's repression and Daddy's indulgence are both a means not of association but of dissociation. Papa treated the children as nuisances! Daddy is too much inclined to treat them as pets . . .

All very true and more rather than less true than in 1914, but if Papa was rather too ready to use summary methods of "correction," Daddy sometimes lashes his children, when provoked, with sarcasm; and it is well to remember Sir Henry Sidney's wise warning quoted at the beginning of this chapter: "a wound given by word is often times harder to be cured than that which is given by the sword."

As for to-day there is no wiser guidance than that given by the late Sir Robert Dummatt at Bow Street to a father and daughter who could not agree. To the father he said

THERE is nothing more disastrous than for Victorian parents to think they can compel their children to do what they think right and to allow them no sense of judgment in their own actions. I am sure, according to your lights, you have been a good parent but your lights are rather dim.

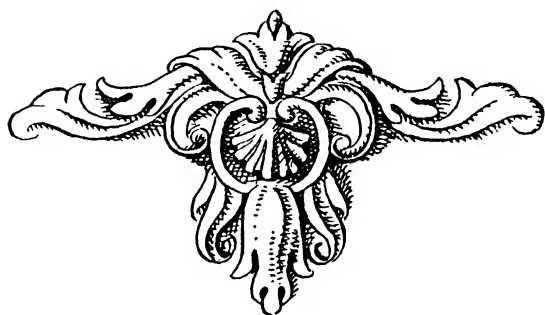
And then, turning to the daughter, he said

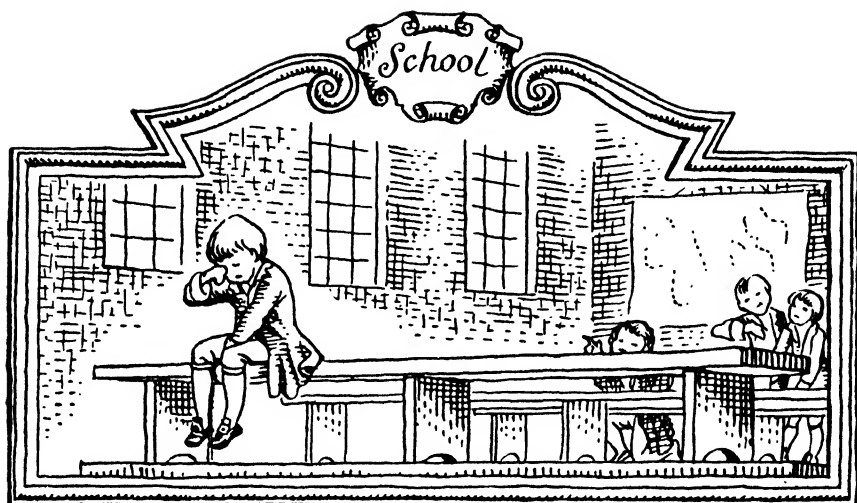
you have overdone the whole thing. Freedom is one thing; licence is another.

Probably cynics nowadays would say that it is the children who are not sufficiently tolerant of the foibles and weaknesses of their parents. It is not so much, as in 1914, that fathers are everything that is "jolly and indulgent" and that mothers are "so wise"; it is rather that fathers are sometimes rather a bore and mothers sometimes rather in the way. In fact the relations of parents and children have gone (still quoting the cynics) from one extreme to another. Certainly when I was young children were constantly hearing that "mother knows best" and that "your father knows what is good for you" and this was accepted as a decision of the final Court of Appeal. To attempt to argue after that was dangerous as well as useless. To-day children are impatient of parental control.

The "divine right" of parentage, the assumption that the mere

fact of being a parent ensures a complete knowledge of the difficult business of managing children is no longer tenable and it will be one of the problems of the future to teach both parents and children how best to accommodate their relations. Ought parents to go to school and if so to whom?—may be one of the questions of returning peace. War in the nursery will not help us to keep peace in the world.





CHAPTER IX

Preparatory School

WHEN, at the age of nine, Samuel Taylor Coleridge entered Christ's Hospital, he was discovered by the terrible Master, Boyer, shedding some natural tears of homesickness, and thus reproved BOY! the school is your father! Boy! the school is your mother! Boy! the school is your brother! the school is your sister! the school is your first cousin! and your second cousin, and all the rest of your relations! Let's have no more crying!

Admirable sentiments but, before we have finished this chapter it will be clear that first schools, almost down to our own day, have been prolific of tears.

Let us therefore begin with Roger Ascham's plea for mercy for the schoolboy. Sitting at dinner at Windsor in 1563 with Mr. Secretary Cecil, Mr. Petre and others, he heard that the excessive severity of the Eton master was causing boys to run away and Mr. Secretary commented

I WISH that some more discretion were in many schoolmasters in using correction than commonly there is; who many times punish the weakness of nature (rather) than the fault of the scholar, whereby

many scholars that might else prove well be driven to hate learning before they know what learning meaneth and so are made willing to forsake their book and be glad to be put to any other kind of living.

To this Mr. Petre took exception declaring that "the rod only was the sword that must keep the school in obedience and the scholars in good order." Mr. Wotton took the Secretary's side

IN mine opinion the school-house should be in deed as it is called by name, the house of play and pleasure and not of fear and bondage.

Another of the company supported Mr. Petre, declaring that the "best schoolmaster of our time was the greatest beater and named the person." And Ascham summed up the matter, thinking that Udall turned out good scholars "rather by the great towardness of the scholar than by the great beating of the master."

I SAID somewhat farther in the matter how and why young children were sooner allured by love than driven by beating to attain good living.

And that opinion he steadfastly maintained.

If children were much beaten in earlier days some of them had or claimed privileges against their master. On March 16, 1710, for instance, Lord George Murray wrote to his father, first Duke of Athole,

MAY it please your Grace, when I was in the school this forenoon there was a grandson of Lady Rolles who was whipt & I, by the privaladge I received at Candlemus, went to protect him but the schoolmaster would not allow me & when I asked him why I might not do it, as well as former kings (sic) he answered that it was he who gave the privaledge, & he could take it away again, & I told him that it would be an affront. He answered me that he would not allow me to doe it and ordered me to sit down, that it was non of my business. After he had don me the affront I resined al the privaledges I had. I cane assure your Grace I gave much pains to my book, especially sins I saw your Grace last, which the schoolmaster can't say against but now I may say it is impossible for me to give pains after such an affront. I would have gon out of the school if I had not thought it would offend your Grace; and hope your Grace will not allow me to be so affronted & let me stay no longer at school or els I will be mocked by everyone.

What exactly the "priviledges" were does not seem to be known. Roger North has a pleasant account of the beginning of his school days.

MY first launching was to a country minister in the neighbourhood. After that to the Free School at Bury St. Edmund's, though very young and small, during which time nothing considerable happened unless it were that I first there perceived two great articles of happiness—liberty and the use of money. For at usual times we had our latitude of ramble in play with equals, which was a most agreeable variety; and in a small purchase of fruit, to which our family were most extremely addicted, I was sensible of greater plenty than I ever yet knew, or hope ever in this world to be again sensible of.

Here however his health was bad and it was at Thetford Free School that he acquired some scholarship under

AN agreeable master. He was scholar enough and withal mild and discreet. He had no fault but too much addicted to drinking company, which at last made him a sot and ended his days. But he used not to neglect his school but took his cups when we took our liberty . . . I came away with a schoolboy's conscience undefiled, never being assisted in any school exercise, but performed all myself.

It was no easy matter for Royalist parents to find schools for their children under the Commonwealth, though we hear of some good preparatory schools such as the Rev. Dr. James Fleetwood's and Mr. Turberville's at Kensington to whom the Verney children were sent. He was "Master of French, Italian, Greeke and Latine and of Musicke and a very good schoolmaster."

There is a good deal about Girls' Schools in the "Verney Memoirs," as for instance

IF it be thought for Betty's advantage to be sent to schoole, though it be deare, I am content to be put to that charge. It seemes the mistress demands £25 a yeare for Diets, Teaching and all other things.

This Betty was evidently a "difficult" child at home for presently an uncle goes to see how she is getting on and reports

IT was a visitt well bestowed for in my lifetime I ne'er saw so greate a change in countenance, fashion, humor and disposition (& all for the better) in any body, neyther could I imagine it possible it coulde

have been wroughte so soone. She now seems to be as contented as e'er before she seemed discontented . . . and if wife can judge she keeps her cloathes as well & as cleanly as can be.

There is a delightful account of the taking of Molly, aged eight, to school at Mrs. Priest's "at Great Chelsey."

TOMORROW I intend to carry my Girle to schoole after I have showed her Bartholomew Faire and the Tombs.

Bartholomew Fair may be supposed to stand for a visit to the pantomime or a child's play nowadays (though the amusements of Bartholomew Fair were decidedly of the "robust" kind, and the Tombs would be those in Westminster Abbey.

AND when I have visited her & a little wonted her to the place I'll come home.

Presently he writes to her

I FIND you have a desire to Jappan (boxes) as you call it, and I approve of itt; & so I shall of any thing that is Good and Virtuous, therefore learn in God's name of Good things and I will willingly be at the Charge, so farr as I am able—tho' they come from Japan and from never so farr and looke of an Indian Hue and Odour, for I admire all accomplishments that will render you considerable and lovely in the sight of God and man & therefore I hope you performe your part according to your word and employ your time well & so I pray and blesse you.

But in those days, as many times since, the whole question of the education of girls was one for lively controversy. Sir Ralph Verney did not approve of "higher education" for girls; writing of his own daughter "Pegg is very backward. I doubt not but she will be schollar enough for a woman." But he and his friend Dr. Denton were hopelessly at odds about the Doctor's daughter, who was his godchild. He protested bitterly against the plans shared by the Doctor and the child herself.

LET not your girle learne Latin, nor Shorthand; the difficulty of the first may keep her from that Vice, for so I must esteeme it in a woeman; but the business of the other may be a prejudice to her; for the pride

of taking Sermon Noates hath made multitudes of Woemen most unfortunate.

This nervousness about the study of Latin by girls is to be found several times in the history of education. Thus when Mary Hamilton, in the reign of George III, announced to an older male cousin that she was learning Latin, he replied

I OWN had you asked my advice I should certainly have persuaded you not to do it. However if you are resolved to go on, I beg you will keep it a dead secret from your most intimate friends as well as from the rest of the world for a lady's being learned is commonly looked upon as a great fault . . . It is not only tedious in taking up years but when acquired of very little use to anybody but those whose employments are what is called the learned professions such as Divinity, etc., and all the books in that language proper to your reading (as many are very improper for ladies) are translated into English.

Harriet Martineau's "pride in taking sermon noates" by memory, a century and a half later, has been noticed in an earlier chapter.

DEAR DOCTOR, teach her to live under obedience and whilst she is unmarried, if she would learn anything, let her aske you and afterwards her husband. Had St. Paul lived in our times, I am most confident he would have fixt a shame on our women for writing (as well as for their speaking) in the church.

To which the girl herself retorted

DEAR GODFATHER, I now show my boldness unto you, supposing that your goodnes is so gret that I dar to presume of it, but not without besegn youer pardon. And I wold intrete you, ser, to present my sarves unto my coussens and I now you and my coussens will out-rech me in French, but I am goinge whaar I hop I shall out-rech you in ebri (Hebrew), grek and latine, praeing you, ser, if may be so good, as to desier on letter from you.

Sir Ralph was quite ready to press his point.

MY DEAR CHILDE, nothings but yourself would have been soe welcome as your letter, nor have surprized me more, for I must confesse I did not think you had beene guilty of soe much learning as I see you are;

and yet it seemes you rest unsatisfied or else you would not threaten Lattin, Greeke and Hebrew too. Good sweet-hart be not soe covitious; beleieve me, a Bible (with ye Common Prayer) and a good plaine cattichisme in your Mother Tongue, being well read and practised, is well worth all the rest and much more sutable to your sexe; I know your Father thinks this false doctrine, but bee confident youre husband will bee of my oppinion. In French you cannot bee too cunning for that language affords many admirable bookes fit for you as Romances, Plays, Poetry, Stories of Illustrious (not learned) Woemen, receipts for preserving, makinge creames and all sorts of cookeryes, ordng your gardens and in Breif all manner of good housewifery. If you please to have a little patience with yourselfe (without Hebrew, Greeke or Lattin) when I goe to Paris againe, I will sende you half a dozen of the french bookes to begin your Library. In the same time I know you will endeavour to understand them and doe me soe much right as to beleieve that above all others, I am, sweetheart, your most affectionate and humble servant.

On receipt of which, it is to be feared, the young lady tossed her head and went back to her "ebri, Greke and Lattin."

Passing to the eighteenth century we have Lord Holland announcing that Charles Fox, then in his seventh year, "determines to go to Wandsworth." It seems that an unfortunate slip by his mother in a classical allusion convinced Charles (already master of his own fate) that he needed more expert tuition. The school at Wandsworth was one "of some celebrity" kept by a Frenchman of the name of Pampellonne. Writing to a later Lord Holland in January 1820 Lord Egremont mentions some of the boys who began their education at Wandsworth.

I WENT to Pampellonne's school at Wandsworth at six years old and at eight I left it and went to Westminster . . . Charles Fox was there in my time, for, I believe, a year . . . There were more boys of some station in life at that little school than usual in so small a number—I think Lord Ilchester, but I am sure his brother . . . The late Duke of Leinster and his elder brother, who died soon after, Lord Fortescue, and I think Lord Braybrook, Sir Thomas Franklin, the late Marquis of Townshend—but he was younger than me, and I do not recollect him, but he was fond of such reminiscences and never met me in company without alluding to it—and many others; but all of them

except one (Lord Aylesford who went with me to Westminster) went to Eton . . . I do not recollect whether the Grenvilles were there, and the probable reason of my doubt about it is that from near relationship I saw so much of them in early youth, that I do not distinguish between home and school.

Edward Gibbon tells us something of his first school

IN my ninth year (January 1746) in a lucid interval of comparative health, my father adopted the convenient and customary mode of English education and I was sent to Kingston-upon-Thames to a school of about seventy boys, which was kept by Dr. Wooddeson and his assistants. Every time I have since passed over Putney Common, I have always noticed the spot where my mother, as we drove along in the coach, admonished me that I was now going into the world and must learn to think and act for myself. The expression may appear ludicrous, yet there is not, in the course of life, a more remarkable change than the removal of a child from the luxury and freedom of a wealthy house to the frugal diet and strict subordination of a school; from the tenderness of parents, and the obsequiousness of servants, to the rude familiarity of equals, the insolent tyranny of his seniors and the rod perhaps of a cruel and capricious pedagogue. Such hardships may steel the mind and body against the injuries of fortune, but my timid reserve was astonished by the crowd and tumult of the school, the want of strength and activity disqualified me for the sports of the playfield.

We get a glimpse of a fashionable provincial school for young ladies about the same period in the "Life" of Mrs. Trimmer, of whom we shall hear more presently.

WHEN old enough to acquire the usual female accomplishments, she was sent for some hours every day to a boarding school in Ipswich kept by Mrs. Justinier. This lady was a woman of elegant manners and refined sentiments and had in her early life moved in the circle of fashion; but an imprudent marriage had cut her off from her family connections, and obliged her, in order to secure a respectable maintenance, to undertake the education of young ladies. At this school her studies were chiefly directed to English and French and she acquired a very good handwriting.

About 1737 William Cowper, aged six, began his school life unhappily enough

HERE I had hardships of various kinds to conflict with which I felt more sensibly in proportion to the tenderness with which I had been treated at home. But my chief affliction consisted in being singled out from all the other boys by a lad of about fifteen years as a proper object on whom he might let loose the cruelty of his temper . . . I well remember being afraid to lift my eyes upon him higher than his knees and that I knew him better by his shoe buckles than by any other part of his dress . . . One day as I was sitting alone upon a bench in the schoolroom, melancholy and almost ready to weep at the recollection of what I had already suffered and expecting at the same time my tormentor every moment, the words of the Psalmist came into my mind. 'I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.' I applied them to my own case with a degree of trust and confidence in God that would not have been a disgrace to a much more experienced Christian. Instantly I perceived in myself a briskness of spirits and of cheerfulness I had never before experienced and took several paces up and down the room with cheerful alacrity.

A famous school for boys later in the century was that of Mr. and Mrs. Barbauld at Palgrave near Diss. The school was given up after eleven years, but while it existed it had among its pupils boys destined to fame as the first Lord Denman, Sir William Gell, Dr. Sayers and William Taylor of Norwich, whose biographer tells us

WILLIAM TAYLOR was entered as a boarder in an Academy then recently established by the Rev. Rochemont Barbauld, minister of the Presbyterian congregation at Palgrave. Here the dead languages became the objects of his study, not indeed with that nice attention to quantities and accents which constitutes so prominent a feature in the routine grammar school exercises of the present day (1843) but he acquired the knowledge of as much Greek and Latin as he appears ever to have found needful or available in the extensive and varied literary course which he afterwards pursued . . . The world of science was opened wide before him; and in his survey of it he was taught to dwell the longest on those objects which were most congenial to his ulterior views. Among these geography and history took the lead; he received also lessons in English composition from the talented and tasteful consort of his preceptor, whom in after years he designated as "the mother of his mind," and always regarded her instructions as the most valuable part of the discipline through which he then passed.

A "preceptor" very unlike Mrs. Barbauld, no doubt, was Miss Pinkerton of Chiswick who presented Miss Amelia Sedley to her parents.

As a young lady not unworthy to occupy a fitting position in their polished and refined circle. In music, in dancing, in orthography, in every variety of embroidery and needlework she will be found to have realised her friends' fondest wishes . . . A careful and undeviating use of the back-board for four hours daily during the next three years, is recommended as necessary to the acquirement of that dignified deportment and carriage, so requisite for every young lady of fashion.

Then too there was young Master George Osborne's education confided in its early stages

to a neighbouring scholar and private pedagogue who prepared young noblemen and gentlemen for the Universities, the Senate, and the learned professions; whose system did not embrace the degrading corporal severities still practised at the ancient places of education, and in whose family the pupils would find the elegancies of refined society and the confidence and affection of a home.

It may be a comfort to some laggard scholars of to-day to recall that even prodigies like Macaulay did not always rush eagerly to school.

WHILE still the merest child he was sent as a day scholar to Mr. Greaves, a shrewd Yorkshireman with a turn for science . . . Mrs. Macaulay explained to Tom that he must learn to study without the solace of bread and butter, to which he replied 'Yes, mama, industry shall be my bread and attention my butter.' But, as a matter of fact, no one ever crept more unwillingly to school. Each several afternoon he made piteous entreaties to be excused returning after dinner and was met by the unvarying formula: 'No, Tom, if it rains cats and dogs, you shall go.'

It is less unexpected perhaps that Empire builders should have no love for school. Certainly Clive had none.

HE was sent from school to school, making very little progress in his learning and gaining for himself everywhere the character of an exceedingly naughty boy. One of his masters, it is said, was sagacious enough to prophesy that the idle lad would make a great figure in the world. But the general opinion seems to have been that poor Robert was a dunce if not a reprobate.

Actually it seems that he fulfilled the conditions of Swift's army captain.

A SCHOLARD when first from his college broke loose
 Can hardly tell how to say boh! to a goose.
 Your Noveds and Pluturchs and Omurs and stuff
 By George, they don't signify this pinch of snuff.
 To give a young gentleman right education,
 The army's the only good school in the nation.
 My schoolmaster called me a dunce and a fool;
 But at cuffs I was always the cock of the school.

Jane Eyre found little enough of elegance at Lowood and little enough of most other things which a girl leaving home for the first time might have expected except from Maria Temple.

MY first quarter at Lowood seemed an age; and not the golden age either; it comprised an irksome struggle with difficulties in habituating myself to new rules and unwonted tasks. The fear of failure in these points harassed me worse than the physical hardship of my lot; for these were no trifles.

Lowood was not entirely imaginary; still less so was Dotheboys Hall, but if Dickens laid on his colours rather thickly, the régime of Mr. Squeers was only an extreme form of what was to be found far into the nineteenth century. Indeed Herman Merivale wrote himself that, precocious as he was, precocity was not

SUFFICIENT reason for robbing an imaginative child of all home influence, for what it might have been worth, and of all home care when he was only eight years old and pitching him head-foremost into a private school of the Dotheboys order, commoner in those days than I hope they may be now.

Worse, if possible, was the school to which the "good" Lord Shaftesbury was sent at the age of seven.

HE lived in a state of constant terror from the cruelty of the older boys and suffered exquisite misery for years through the neglect and inhumanity of the principal of the school in failing to provide sufficiently even the necessities of life. The memory of that place (he said in old age) makes me shudder. It is repulsive to me even now. I think there never was such a wicked school before or since. The place was bad, wicked, filthy, and the treatment was starvation and cruelty.

This may well make strange reading for parents and children to-day. Cruelty and inhumanity are no longer known in our private schools. It happens, though, that one of the best pictures of a Preparatory School which we have was painted nearly a century and a half ago by George Crabbe.

ANOTHER Matron of superior kind
For higher Schools prepares the rising mind;
Preparatory she her Learning calls,
The step first made to Colleges and Halls.

She early sees to what the Mind will grow,
Nor abler Judge on Infant Powers I know;
She sees what soon the lively will impede,
And how the steadier will in turn succeed;
Observes the Dawn of Wisdom, Fancy, Taste,
And knows what Parts will wear and what will waste;
She marks the Mind too lively and at once
Sees the gay Coxcomb and the rattling Dunce.

Long has she liv'd and much she loves to trace
Her former Pupils, now a lordly Race;
Whom when she sees rich Robes and Furs bedeck,
She marks the Pride which once she strove to check;
A Burgess comes and she remembers well
How hard her task to make his Worship spell;

.

A merchant passes—'Probity and Truth,
Prudence and Patience, marked thee from thy Youth.'
Thus she observes, but oft retains her fears
For him, who now with Name unstain'd appears;
Nor hope relinquishes, for one who yet
Is lost in Error and involv'd in Debt;
For latent Evil in that Heart she found,
More open here, but here the Core is sound.

Girls nowadays escape some of the tortures thought essential in the past to develop in them a good "carriage." Something has been said in an earlier chapter of the tyranny of the backboard and the iron collar but there were worse things still. Maria Edgeworth, for instance,

went to a very fashionable school in Upper Wimpole Street and to the "usual tortures of the backboard, iron collar and dumb bells" had to undergo the unusual one of "being swung by the neck to draw out the muscles and increase her growth." An expedient which had little effect in her case. They could also continue such "exercises" at home, for an advertisement in a newspaper of February 1810 offered "Patent Grand Exercise Frames particularly intended for YOUNG LADIES, the use of which will not only remove deformities but will infallibly produce strength, health, symmetry, beauty and superior elegance of deportment etc."

I should like to end this chapter by noticing a curious habit of autobiographers in the crying down of preparatory schools. It is a well-known trait of boyhood to exaggerate the rigours of school life, the severity of punishment, the badness of food, and so forth. It may be that the very fact that autobiographies seem often to be written in second childhood, exaggerates this peculiarity, for it is rare indeed to read reminiscences of a private school which do not represent the proprietor and his family as gorging the richest of food while the boys get stuff hardly eatable in spite of high fees; the masters as inefficient and so forth. It happens that I have a family connection with two famous private schools of the past, that of William Lee in Brighton and that founded by my grandmother in Montpelier Crescent in the same town. After my father succeeded his mother in this school, he transferred it to Stanmore Park in Middlesex, and I can remember parents who did not attempt to conceal their surprise when they found that the noble range of connecting rooms in the south front of that beautiful house was handed over to the boys' use in term time while my father's library and my mother's drawing-room were on the bleaker north front. At meal times family, guests, masters and boys had exactly the same food and ate it in the same dining-room. No doubt keeping school on these lines was not the way to make a fortune, but it does seem fair to set such a case against those so frequently cited on the other side.



CHAPTER X

Little or No Education

IN the year 1814 the biographer of Mrs. Trimmer wrote
 THE diffusion in knowledge amongst the poor is now become so general that we cannot easily go back to the recollection of a time when, except in the old established parochial charity schools and a few schools endowed or supported by private individuals, there was scarcely an institution for the education of the poor in the land before the establishment of Sunday schools.

SHENSTONE who was born in 1714 produced an "Imitation of Spenser" describing the old dame school.

Her cap, far whiter than the driven snow,
 Emblem right mete of decency does yield;
 Her apron dy'd in grain, as blue, I trow,
 As is the hare-bell that adorns the field;
 And in her hand, for sceptre, she does wield
 Tway birchen sprays! with anxious fear entwined,
 With dark distrust, and sad repentance filled;
 And steadfast hate, and sharp affliction joined,
 And fury uncontrolled, and chastisement unkind.

George Crabbe who was born in 1754 has a kindlier picture

To every Class we have a School assigned,
 Rules for all Ranks and Food for every Mind;
 Yet one there is, that small regard to Rule
 Or Study pays, and still is deemed a school
 That, where a deaf, poor, patient widow sits,
 And awes some thirty Infants as she knits;
 Infants of humble, busy Wives, who pay
 Some trifling Price for Freedom through the day. . . .

Crabbe carries us another step forward

To Learning's second Seats we now proceed,
 Where humming Students gilded primers read;
 Or Books with Letters large and Pictures gay,
 To make their reading but a kind of Play—
 "Reading made Easy," so the Titles tell;
 But they who read must first begin to spell.

And there is Oliver Goldsmith's schoolmaster in "The Deserted Village."

A man severe he was, and stern to view;
 I knew him well, and every truant knew;
 Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
 The day's disasters in his morning's face;
 Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee
 At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
 Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
 Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned.
 Yet he was kind; or if severe in aught,
 The love he bore to learning was in fault.
 The village all declared how much he knew;
 'Twas certain he could write and cipher too;
 Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
 And even the story ran that he could gauge.

But the "diffusing of knowledge" mentioned so complacently by Mrs. Trimmer's biography was not really very wide. Thirty years later the position of affairs was summed up in the second report of the Children Employment Commission of 1843 which was concerned largely with grant-aided schools and the like:

IN all the districts many children, who had been returned as able to read, when examined were found to know only the letters of the alphabet, a very small proportion indeed being able to read well an easy book.

Even in the case of those who could read fluently

FEW were found to have any conception of the meaning of the words they uttered or were able to give any intelligible account of what seemed to the examiners to be simple and easy things; so that as far as regards the acquisition of any useful knowledge or the accomplishment of any higher purpose . . . the children in great numbers of instances were as little benefited after years of so-called tuition as if they had never been at school.

Nor did the Sunday schools escape criticism of

TEACHERS volunteering their meritorious efforts, which however are altogether unsystematic and feeble—great numbers of these children who had been in regular attendance at Sunday-schools for five to nine years were found on examination to be incapable of reading an easy book or of spelling the commonest word; and they were not only altogether ignorant of Christian principles, doctrines and precepts, but they knew nothing whatever of any of the events of Scripture history nor anything even of the names most commonly occurring in the Scriptures.

It is well indeed that Sarah Trimmer did not live to read that for she threw herself with enthusiasm into the Sunday-school movement and advised others in the management of the schools. Here is a letter she wrote in 1788

IN the beginning we rejected all under six years of age, but since the children at first admitted have been reduced to tolerable order and brought pretty forward in reading we now take in a number of little creatures not more than four or five years old who are exceedingly fond of coming and give us but very little interruption. We wish to have them at as early an age as possible before bad habits have taken root.

I think it would be advisable to collect these little ones into a separate school under a cheerful, good-natured mistress but am not certain that this method would answer better than our own as the great girls help to instruct the little children.

Our Sunday Scholars who were at first ragged and dirty in the

extreme are now in general very tidy, chiefly through the exertions of the parents, but we have distributed a good many articles of apparel among the girls. The boys have occasionally, for two months together, been allowed twopence in the shilling towards their new clothing which has had a wonderful effect.

At about the same time Hannah More and her sisters, encouraged by the Wilberforces and others, were establishing their schools in the Cheddar and Mendip districts. It may seem almost irreverent to include the name of the authoress of "Strictures on Female Education" in a chapter with this heading, but her refusal to have her children taught writing and her dismay towards the end of her life in finding that "children of the poor" were being turned into "scholars or philosophers" justify the inclusion. The task was no easy one

MISS WILBERFORCE would have been shocked could she have seen the petty tyrants whose insolence we stroked and tamed, the ugly children we fondled . . . the cider we commended, and the wine we swallowed.

One of her biographers relates how

SOME of the opulent farmers to whom they applied in making their extensive rounds, received them with civility; but, upon opening their business, assured them that the novelties they were introducing would be the ruin of agriculture. Others, more favourably disposed, told them that they had read something about Sunday-schools in the Bristol papers, and believed they might be very good things for keeping children from robbing their orchards . . .

Two mining villages at the top of Mendip particularly claimed their attention. These were ignorant and depraved even beyond those of Cheddar,—so ignorant as to apprehend a design to make money by carrying off their children for slaves. The place was considered as so ferocious that no constable would venture there to execute his office; and these bold instructresses were warned by their friends that they were bringing their own lives into danger.

Writing to Wilberforce Hannah More declared that "At the end of a year we perceived that much ground had been gained among the poor; but the success was attended with no small persecution from the rich, though some of them grew more favourable." In their sixth

year at Cheddar they reported that "Two hundred children and about two hundred old people constantly attend."

It must be remembered that children were regarded as wage-earners at a very tender age, that universal and compulsory elementary education lay far in the future and that, though for very different reasons, large numbers of people were of the opinion of the writer of "Poems of Innocence" that "there is no use in education," at least, for the "lower orders." In 1844 Sir James Graham, having failed to pass, in the previous year, a measure regulating the hours of labour in factories and proposing a system for the education of the children of the industrial class in the manufacturing towns, brought in a new Bill defining a child in labour as one between nine and fourteen years old and limiting its employment to six hours and a half daily. In the country a child went to work as soon as it was old enough to scare crows in a field. Cobbett said that he could not remember the time when he was not earning his own living. One of the most famous passages in our literature is that in which Disraeli scourged the employment of girls in mines.

NAKED to the waist, an iron chain fastened to a belt of leather runs between their legs, clad in canvas trousers while on hands and feet, an English girl, for twelve, sometimes for sixteen hours a day, hauls and hurries tubs of coal up subterranean roads, dark, precipitous, and plashy; circumstances that seem to have escaped the notice of the Society for the Abolition of Negro Slavery . . . See too these emerge from the bowels of the earth; Infants of four and five years of age, many of them girls, pretty and still soft and timid; entrusted with the fullfilment of responsible duties, and the nature of which entails on them the necessity of being the earliest to enter the mine and the latest to leave it. Their labour indeed is not severe, for that would be impossible, but it is passed in darkness and solitude.

We had very far to go before we evolved the idea of nursery schools faintly envisaged by Mrs. Trimmer.

One of the troubles of "little education" was that, as always, those concerned in it quarrelled bitterly among themselves. Hannah More had many controversies: Sarah Trimmer denounced as "the Goliath

of Systematics" Joseph Lancaster whose "Monitorial System" drew from George III the compliment "I highly approve of your system, and it is my wish that every poor child in my Dominions should be taught to read the Bible." Graham's education scheme of 1843 came to grief because the Nonconformists complained that the education clauses of the Bill conferred advantages on the Established Church as against the Free Churches. Yet at that time "the lowest estimate of those who required education was 3,000,000, and after all deductions had been made for those who were educated privately, and for pauper children, there would still remain 1,800,000 for whose training the public were answerable. In the existing schools, whether of the Established Church or in the Dissenting bodies, somewhat over 800,000 pupils were taught, leaving nearly a million children in England and Wales to whom no education was given."

Yet the age and that preceding it produced some remarkable men. William Cobbett wrote of his own education

I HAVE some faint recollection of going to school to an old woman who, I believe, did not succeed in teaching me my letters. In the winter evenings my father learnt us all to read and write and gave us a pretty tolerable knowledge of arithmetic. Grammar he did not perfectly understand himself and therefore his endeavour to learn us that failed; for though he thought he understood it, although he made us get the rules by heart, we learned nothing at all of the principles.

Actually however Cobbett, by his own account, got his education elsewhere—on a sand hill near Farnham

A SAND hill which goes from a part of the heath down to the revulet. As a due mixture of pleasure with toil, I, with two brothers, used occasionally to desport ourselves . . . at this sand hill. Our diversion was this: we used to go to the top of the hill, which was steeper than the roof of the house; one used to draw his arms out of the sleeves of his smock-frock, and lay himself down with his arms by his side; and then the others, one at head and the other at feet, sent him rolling down the hill like a barrel or a log of wood. By the time he got to the bottom, his hair, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, were all full of this loose sand; then the others took their turn, and at every roll there was a monstrous spell of laughter. . .

This was the spot where I was receiving my education; and this was the sort of education; and I am perfectly satisfied that, if I had not received such an education, or something very much like it; that, if I had been brought up a milksop with a nursery-maid everlastingly at my heels, I should have been at this day as great a fool, as inefficient a mortal, as any of those frivolous idiots that are turned out from Winchester and Westminster Schools or from any of those dens of dunces called Colleges and Universities. It is impossible to say how much I owe to that sand hill; and I went to return it my thanks for the ability which it probably gave me to be one of the greatest terrors to one of the greatest and most powerful bodies of knaves and fools that ever were permitted to afflict this or any other country.

Then, as at most other times, the ladder to success was generously provided for poor boys of talent in Scotland. Thomas Telford, the great road and canal engineer, was a poor boy but he was accustomed to declare that, in his opinion, this was an advantage rather than a handicap and he was fortunate in beginning life at a time when village education in Scotland was declared by competent authority to have been "unexcelled, probably unequalled."

On the other side of the Border George Stephenson was less fortunate. He grew up without learning to read.

HE was anxious to know something of the wonderful engines of Boulton and Watt, and was told that they were to be found fully described in books, which he must search for information as to their construction, action and uses. But, alas, Stephenson could not read; he had not yet learnt even his letters. . . .

Although a grown man . . . he was not ashamed to confess his ignorance, and go to school, big as he was, to learn his letters . . . His first schoolmaster was Robin Cowens, a poor teacher in the village of Walbottle. He kept a night-school, which was attended by a few of the colliers and labourers' sons of the neighbourhood. George took lessons in spelling and reading three nights in the week. Robin Cowens' teaching cost threepence a week; and though it was not very good, yet George, being hungry for knowledge and eager to acquire it, soon learned to read. He also practised "pot hooks," and at the age of nineteen he was proud to be able to write his own name.

A Scotch dominie, named Andrew Robertson, set up a night-school in the village of Newburn, in the winter of 1799. It was more con-

venient for George to attend this school, as it was nearer to his work, . . . Besides, Andrew had the reputation of being a skilled arithmetician . . . He accordingly began taking lessons from him, paying fourpence a week.

And it is on record that "he took to figures wonderful." This recalls the answer which Edmund Stone gave to the Duke of Argyll who asked him how he, a poor gardener's boy, had contrived to be able to read Newton's "Principia" in Latin.

ONE needs only to know the twenty-four letters of the alphabet in order to learn everything else that one wishes.

Perhaps the most distinguished product of a village school in England was one of the greatest of all our Empire builders—Warren Hastings. Born of an "ancient and illustrious race" which in his branch was greatly impoverished at the time of his birth in 1732

HE was left dependent on his distressed grand-father. The child was early sent to the village school, where he learned his letters on the same bench with the sons of the peasantry; nor did anything in his garb or fare indicate that his life was to take a widely different course from that of the young rustics with whom he studied and played. But no cloud could overcast the dawn of so much genius and so much ambition. The very ploughmen observed and long remembered how kindly little Warren took to his book.

Another illustrious figure, that of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, does not seem to have "taken kindly to his book."

OF the early education bestowed upon the great general, we know but little, except that it was extremely limited. He may be termed self-educated; necessity first—ambition afterwards, being his preceptresses. Yet the disadvantages of early neglect were never, even by the assiduous and gifted Marlborough, wholly overcome. To the close of his life, after his extensive commerce with the continental world, he could not speak French without difficulty. He was probably wholly unacquainted with the dead languages; it was said that he never could master even the orthography of his own language.

We began this chapter with the village school; we may close it with the ragged school of the towns, with John Pounds, the Portsmouth

cobbler, from whose pioneering work so much was to come. It was in 1819 that he began his work which continued for twenty years.

Dr. Guthrie, "Apostle of the Ragged Schools," tells how, in an obscure border burgh, he happened to see a picture of a cobbler

SPECTACLES on nose, an old shoe between his knees—the massive forehead and firm mouth indicating great determination of character, and, beneath his bushy eyebrows, benevolence gleamed out on a number of poor, ragged boys and girls who stood at their lessons round him . . . In the Inscription, I read how this man, John Pounds, a cobbler in Portsmouth, taking pity on the multitude of poor, ragged children left by ministers and magistrates and ladies and gentlemen to go to ruin on the streets—how, like a good shepherd, he gathered in these wretched outcasts; how he had trained them to God and to the world—and how, while earning his daily bread by the sweat of his brow, he had rescued from misery and saved to society not less than five hundred of these children . . . I took up that man's history and I found it animated by the spirit of Him who "had compassion on the multitude" . . . When the day comes when honour will be done to whom honour is due I can imagine . . . this poor, obscure old man stepping forward and receiving the especial notice of Him who said "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these, ye did it also to Me."

Now when we are looking forward to a not distant time when the "career open to talent" will be possible, for those best fitted for it, from the Nursery School to the Universities and beyond, we do not forget the splendid services of the highly trained teachers of to-day when we pay tribute to the humble pioneers of "little education."

Finally for many children there was only the workhouse in which they were born and brought up till old enough to be apprenticed to a trade. Dickens drew a terrible picture of such an "education" in *Oliver Twist* and perhaps it is only fair to set against that what Isopel Berners had to say in *Lavengro*. Isopel Berners has been called Borrow's only heroine, and there are few more arresting portraits in literature than that of the stalwart whose motto was "Fair Play and Long Melford." The "dauntless Belle" lost her mother three months after her birth; her father had been lost at sea when he was returning to marry his old love.

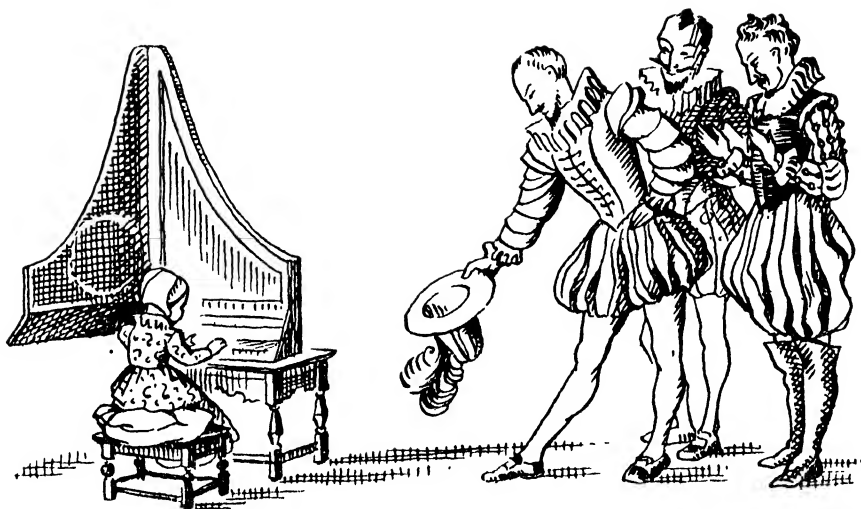
so I was born and bred in the great house where I learnt to read and sew, to fear God and to take my own part

And though when she returned there after an unfortunate period of service she was

PUT into a dark room where I was kept a fortnight on bread and water; I did not much care, however, being glad to have got back to the great house at any rate, the place where I was born and where my poor mother died, and in the great house I continued two years longer, reading and sewing, fearing God and taking my own part when necessary.

There have been worse systems of education in much more splendid places than Long Melford workhouse.





CHAPTER XI

Some Royal Children

OF the childhood of the Tudor children, of their vicissitudes, and of their accomplishments, a good deal has been preserved. The extent and variety of their education owed something to the chance that made Henry VIII King. He was a second son and it was the intention of his father that he should become Archbishop of Canterbury.

HIS education was accurate, being destined, as a credible author affirms, to the Archbishopric of Canterbury, that prudent King, his father, choosing this as the most cheap and glorious way for bestowing a younger son, for as he at once disburdened his Revenue and the Public from the charge incident to so great a person, so he left a passage open to Ambition, especially since Eugenius IV had declared the place of a Cardinal above all others in the Church. By these means not only the more necessary parts of Learning were infused into him but even those of ornament, so that, besides his being an able Latinist, Philosopher and Divine, he was (which one might wonder at in a King) a curious musician. . . .

We shall see all this reflected in the education of his children when the death of his elder brother made him King. Henry's eldest child,

Mary, first Queen Regnant of England, was born at Greenwich Palace, February 18, 1516, and baptized on the third day after her birth. Her nursery was established at Ditton Park

THE care of her person was given to Lady Margaret Bryan, called the Lady Mistress, who superintended the meals of the royal infant, which consisted of one dish of meat with bread. The Countess of Salisbury was State Governess and head of the Household, the annual expense of which amounted to £1,100. Sir Weston Browne was Chamberlain; Richard Sydnour was Treasurer and accountant; Alice Baker, gentlewoman of the bedchamber at a salary of £10 while Alice Wood, laundress, had 33 shillings a year. Sir Henry Rowte, priest, was chaplain and clerk of the closet with an allowance of sixpence a day.

It must be remembered that there was a great difference in the value of money then and Froude estimated that, at this period, a penny would buy about as much as a shilling in the mid-Victorian era. The Nursery Court travelled about; sometimes it was at Hanworth and, when the King and Queen went to France for the Field of the Cloth of Gold, Mary was established at their Palace of Richmond where she was visited by "three noble Frenchmen" as recorded in a report to Cardinal Wolsey from the Privy Council. They found the four-year-old Princess

RIGHT honourably accompanied, as well spiritual as temporal and her house and chambers furnished with a proper number of goodly gentlemen and tall yeomen . . . And when the gentlemen of France came into the Presence Chamber of the Princess, her grace in suchwise showed herself unto them in welcoming them with most goodly countenance, proper communication and pleasant pastime in playing on the virginals, that they greatly marvelled and rejoiced at the same, her tender age considered.

Pollino, the Italian, adds that she could play what was apparently the clavichord at a very early age

THIS she used to play when a very little child: and she had so far mastered the difficulties as to have a light touch with much grace and velocity.

At nine years of age she was sent down with her Household to Ludlow Castle and a report to Wolsey describes her arrival

MY Lady Princess came hither on Saturday; surely, sir, of her age, so goodly a child as ever I have seen, and of as good gesture and countenance. Few persons of her age blend sweetness better with seriousness or quickness with deference; she is at the same time joyous and decorous in manners.

Those who think that all ideas of hygiene are modern even in the case of Palaces may learn something from the precise instructions given about her management. The King instructed Lady Salisbury to give

MOST tender regard to all that concerns the person of the Princess, her honourable education and training in virtuous demeanour, that is to say, to serve God from whom all grace and goodness proceedeth. Likewise, at seasons convenient, to use moderate exercise, taking open air in gardens, sweet and wholesome places and walks . . . and likewise to pass her time, most seasons, at her virginals or other musical instruments, so that the same be not too much, and without fatigacion or weariness, to attend to her learning of the Latin tongue and French; at other seasons to dance, and among the rest to have good respect to her diet which is mete to be pure, well prepared, dressed and served with comfortable, joyous and merry communication, . . . likewise the cleanliness and well wearing of her garments and apparel both of her chamber and person, so that everything about her be pure, sweet, clean and wholesome, as to so great a Princess doth appertain; all corruptions, evil airs and things noisome and unpleasant to be eschewed.

Her mother asked Ludovicus Vives, a learned Spaniard, to draw up a scheme for the child's reading. The scheme must be summarized and may be compared with that suggested by Hannah More, nearly three centuries later, for George IV's daughter.

According to his scheme Vives "defies and denounces" all works of romance from *Lancelot du Lac* to *Pyramus and Thisbe* as "libri pestiferi," corrupting the "morals of females." His choice for the child included

THE Gospels, night and morning, the Epistles, selected portions of the Old Testament, the works of Cyprian, Jerome, Augustine and

Ambrose, of Plato, and Cicero, Seneca's Maxims, Plutarch's Enchiridion, the Paraphrase of Erasmus, and the Utopia of More, the Pharsalia of Lucan, the Tragedies of Seneca and selected portions of Horace.

Cards, dice and splendid dress are as pestiferous as romances . . . Lessons from Latin and Greek should be committed to memory every day and read over two or three times before she goes to bed. She may read some stories for her recreation but they must be purely historical, religious or sacred.

Poor little Princess; might her life have been happier had she been allowed to read those romances which were so sternly forbidden and to spend fewer hours over the "Fathers"? But at present her future was unclouded and we may leave her still in high favour with the King.

The second child, Elizabeth, destined to be the great Queen, was only in her third year when her mother was beheaded and she herself declared illegitimate. But for a brief space all honour was paid to her. Faulkner, writing in 1810, reconstructs her first nursery palace at Chelsea.

THE air of this beautiful village agreed so well with the Royal infant, that Henry VIII built a palace there, of which the husband of her governess was given the post as Keeper and, so lately as the time of Charles II, one room in the Manor House was known by the name of Queen Elizabeth's nursery. An old mulberry tree in the garden is said to have been planted by her hand. The King also erected a conduit at Kensington for supplying the nursery palace with spring water which was lately entire and called Henry VIII conduit; likewise a bath house on the west side of Kensington Palace Green . . . Tradition declares that it was used by Queen Elizabeth, when a child, as a bathing house.

But evil days came quickly and presently we have her nurse writing to Thomas Cromwell complaining that the child has not the merest necessities in the way of clothes. But that phase passed also and when she was six years old, she was living with her sister at Hertford Castle. It was at this time that Wriothsley wrote with enthusiasm of a visit he paid to her.

I WENT then to my Lady Elizabeth's grace and to the same made His Majesty's most hearty commendations, declaring that his Highness

desired to hear of her health, and sent his blessing; she gave humble thanks, enquiring after his Majesty's welfare, and that with as great gravity as she had been forty years old. If she be no worse educated than she now appeareth to me, she will prove of no less honour than beseemeth her father's daughter.

Her attainments, even before she reached her teens, were certainly remarkable. Her Italian exercise book on fine vellum is among the treasures of the British Museum. She was an accomplished Latin scholar

AND astonished some of the most erudite linguists of that age by the ease and grace with which she conversed in that language. French, Italian, Flemish and Spanish she both spoke and wrote with facility. She was fond of poetry . . . but only regarded this as the amusement of her leisure hours, bestowing more of her time and attention to the study of history than anything else.

No doubt her inclination to astrology had something to do with the extraordinary vicissitudes of her youth which brought her at least once very near Tower Hill. She was indeed in some danger also of implication in a charge of occult practices, and among the State Papers there is a letter which contains this curious passage:

IN England all is quiet. Such as wrote traitorous letters into Germany be apprehended; as likewise others that did calculate the king's, the queen's and my lady Elizabeth's nativity whereof one Dee, and Carey, and Butler, and one other of my lady Elizabeth's, are accused that they should have a familiar spirit; which is the more suspected, for that Ferys, one of their accusers, had, immediately on the accusation, both of his children stricken, the one with death, and the other with blindness.

Elizabeth, as Queen, continued to favour Dr. Dee; yet she was no dupe of the astrologers, for once when her women begged her not to look at the comet, supposed to presage evil for her, she ordered the window to be thrown open, pointed to the comet and said "Jacta est alea—the die is cast. My steadfast hope and confidence are too firmly planted in the providence of God, to be blasted or affrighted by these beams."

An ingenious historian might amuse himself by re-writing the history of England on the assumption that Henry, Prince of Wales, who died untimely before reaching full manhood, succeeded James I instead of his younger brother, Charles, for Henry, by all accounts, should have made a good and wise king. It was to him that Raleigh addressed one of the wisest of letters.

YOUR father is called the Vice Regent of Heaven; while he is good, he *is* the Vice Regent of Heaven. Shall man have authority from the Fountain of Good to do evil? No, my Prince, let mean and degenerate spirits which want benevolence suppose your power impaired by a disability of doing injuries. If want of power to do ill be an incapacity in a prince, with reverence be it spoken, it is an incapacity he hath in common with the Deity . . . Exert yourself, Oh generous Prince, against such sycophants, in the glorious cause of liberty and assume such an ambition worthy of you to rescue your fellow creatures from slavery; from the condition as much below that of brutes as to act without any reason is less miserable than to act against it. Preserve to your future subjects the Divine right of free agents and to your own Royal house the Divine right of being their benefactors. Believe me, my Prince, there is no other right that can flow from God.

And if we go a year or so outside our limitations, we shall find a contemporary writing.

IN the 17th and 18th years of his age, Prince Henry began not only to be a man in stature but also in courage and wisdom to the admiration of all. And, with the eyes of his spirit, surveying the mighty inheritance whereunto he was heir apparent, he did also strain to be the better furnished, if ever he should undergo so great a burden . . . (it being wisdom in time of peace to prepare for the same knowing that peace is the harbinger of war) chiefly in ships, counted the brazen wall of this Isle, he in the time of our security, thought thereof. And therefore did not only intreat his Majesty to build him a ship called the *Prince*, the fairest of this Isle, but also, to advance the affairs of the Navy to his power, now and then got leave of his Majesty to view the ships and store-houses, which diverse times he did.

Mary and Anne, daughters of James, Duke of York, and Anne Hyde, destined unexpectedly to become in turn Queens Regnant of England, were brought up together. Mary was born in April 1662 and Anne in

February 1664. Of the two Mary was always the more attractive, "a beautiful and engaging child," and her father was devoted to her. In September 1664 Pepys wrote in his Diary "to St. James', and there did our business as usual with the Duke; and saw him with great pleasure play with his little girle, like an ordinary private father of the child." Mary must have been almost the youngest godmother on record since she stood sponsor for her sister. Anne was never as attractive as her sister and we read that her health

was injured in her infancy by the pernicious indulgence of her mother. The only fault of the Duchess was an inordinate love of eating and the same propensity developed in both her daughters. The Duchess encouraged it in the little Lady Anne who used to sup with her on chocolate and devour good things till she grew as round as a ball.

However, eight months separation from her mother in the nursery of the French Court restored her health. The children lost their mother in 1671 and their father announcing his second marriage to them said "I have provided you a playfellow." King Charles appointed Bishop Henry Compton preceptor of the children and they never showed the slightest desire to rival Mary and Elizabeth Tudor in accomplishments.

THE Lady Mary and the Lady Anne either studied or let it alone just as suited their inclination. It suited those of the Lady Anne to let it alone for she grew up in a state of utter ignorance. There are few housemaids (wrote the mid-Victorian Agnes Strickland) whose progress in the common business of reading and writing is not more respectable. Her spelling was not in the antiquated style of the 17th century but in that style lashed by her contemporary Swift as peculiar to the ladies of his day. The construction of her letters and notes is vague and vulgar . . .

Of Mary her French tutor Peter de Laine gives a better account:

HE has left honourable testimony to the docility and application of the Lady Mary. He declares that she was a perfect mistress of the French language and that all those who had been honoured with any share in her education found their labours very light, as she possessed aptitude and faithfulness of memory, and ever showed obliging readiness in complying with their advice.

In appearance the sisters were not at all alike.

THE Lady Mary was in person a Stuart; she was tall, slender, and graceful, with a clear complexion, almond shaped dark eyes, dark hair, and an elegant outline of features. The Lady Anne of York resembled the Hydes, and had the round face and full form of her mother and the Lord Chancellor Clarendon. In her youth, she was a pretty, rosy Hebe; her hair a dark chestnut brown, her complexion sanguine and ruddy, her face round and comely, her features strong but regular. The only blemish in her face arose from a defluxion, which had fallen on her eyes in her childhood; it had contracted her lids and given her a cloudiness to her countenance. Her bones were very small, her hands and arms most beautiful. She had a good ear for music and performed well on the guitar.

Pepys was enthusiastic about Mary's dancing:

IN the meantime, stepping to the Duchess of York's side to speak with Lady Peterborough, I did see the young Duchess, a little child in hanging sleeves, dance most finely, so as almost to ravish me, her ears were so good: taught by a Frenchman that did heretofore teach the King.

The two children of King George VI have shown a fondness and an aptitude for dancing and private theatricals, and the same was true of Mary and Anne who appeared at Court in 1674 in a ballet called *Calista* or *The Chaste Nymph*. They were coached, as we know from Cibber, by Mrs. Betterton, wife of Thomas Betterton, the leading actor of the period.

SHE was to the last, the Admiration of all true Judges of Nature and Lovers of Shakespeare, in whose Plays she chiefly excell'd and without a Rival. When she quitted the Stage several good Actresses were the better for her Instruction. She was a Woman of an unblemish'd and sober Life and had the Honour to teach Queen Anne, when Princess, a Part of *Semandra* in *Mithridates*, which she acted at Court in King Charles' time. After the death of her husband, that Princess, when Queen, ordered her a pension for life.

No doubt it is true that "the important accomplishment for which both were distinguished when Queens, of pronouncing answers to addresses or making speeches from the throne in a distinct and clear

voice, with sweetness and intonation and grace of enunciation," was due to Mrs. Betterton's teaching. They acted also in *Calista*.

Among those who took part in the ballet was Sarah Jennings, afterwards "Mrs. Freeman" and Duchess of Marlborough. The Epilogue was written by Dryden and addressed to Charles II. It included the lines:

two glorious nymphs of your own godlike line,
Whose morning rays like noontide strike and shine,
Whom you to suppliant monarchs shall dispose,
To bind your friends, and to disarm your foes.

Sir Walter Scott mentions that Merrick, by a slip, said "supplant" instead of suppliant in the third line and added dryly, "But as the glorious nymphs supplanted their father, the blunder proved an emendation on the original."

John Evelyn saw the performance twice, noting on the first occasion

SAW a comedie at night at Court, acted by the ladies onely, amongst them Lady Mary and Ann, his Royal Highness' two daughters and my dear friend Mrs. (Miss) Blagg who having the principal part, performed it to admiration. They were all covered with jewels . . . Was at the repetition of the Pastoral on which occasion Mrs. Blagg had about her neere £20,000 worth of jewels of which she lost one worth about £80 borrowed of the Countess of Suffolk. The press was so great, that it is a wonder she lost no more. The Duke of York made it good.

The only one of Queen Anne's many children to offer hope of succession was William, Duke of Gloucester, though his hold on life was tenuous enough. Still he seems to have been a gallant little fellow and we are told that he had his own regiment of boy soldiers whom he drilled sometimes on Wormwood Scrubs, and when one day he fell down and grazed his forehead, he put aside the condolences of the Court ladies. "A soldier," said he, "does not cry when he is wounded." We hear of him frightening his mother by insisting on rolling

down the slope of the dry ditch of one of the (Windsor) Castle fortifications, declaring that when he was engaged in battle and sieges, he must descend such places.

At six years old he presented himself before King William with a little musket on his shoulder and saluted him correctly, saying, "I am learning my drill that I may help you to beat the French." But he died when only nine.

Of the Hanoverians, with their family feuds, there are not many very pleasant anecdotes of childhood. George I hated his son and George II and his Queen outdid each other in denunciations of Frederick, Prince of Wales—"Poor Fred, who was alive and is dead." When he was only a boy his tutor went to the Queen to complain of his behaviour. And when she tried to excuse the boy by saying that these tricks were common to children, he replied acidly, "Nay, madame, they are the tricks of knaves and lackeys."

There is a pleasant little story of George III and his affection for his nurse. He was put out to nurse and

THE fine healthy fresh-coloured wife of the head gardener of one of the palaces was chosen. This person, besides the first recommendation of an excellent constitution, and much maternal experience, was characterised by qualities of a higher order—great quickness of feeling, much goodness of heart, and a disposition at once candid and disinterested. She undertook the anxious charge with cheerfulness, but when it was made known to her, that, according to the Court etiquette, the Royal infant could not be allowed to sleep with her; she instantly revolted, and in terms both warm and blunt, expressed herself, "Not sleep with me? Then you may nurse the boy yerselves."

On the other hand George II's eldest daughter, afterwards the Princess of Orange, was an extremely accomplished child, for Lady Cowper, in her Diary for December 1714 notes

AFTER dinner I went to wait on the little Princesses who are miracles of their ages, especially Princess Anne, who at five years old speaks, reads, and writes both German and French to perfection, knows a great deal of history and geography, speaks English very prettily, and dances very well.

Early in the 19th century it appeared that George IV's only daughter, Charlotte, would succeed him on the throne as Queen Regnant, and it occurred to Hannah More, then considered the first living authority

on the education of women, to write a tract with the title *Hints Towards Forming the Character of a Young Princess*, which contains her ideas on the education of a Queen-to-be. Among these

LATIN is indispensable. By a proficiency in Latin she will learn to be more accurate in her definitions as well as more critically exact and elegant in the use of her own language and her ability to manage it with grace, fullness and vigour, will be considerably increased. She must guard against that desultory manner of reading too common in this day, particularly among women. She will not have much leisure for music or the fine arts.

The art of reigning is the profession of a prince and it is a science that requires at least as much preparation and study as any other. Let her ever bear in mind that she is not to study to become learned but that she may become wise.

It may be doubted whether King Edward VII ever read this treatise, but of this paragraph he would certainly have approved highly. "It is my *métier* to be King," said he when asked to condone a Royal assassination. Hannah More continued:

THE memory should be stored with none but the best things so that when hereafter the judgement is brought into exercise, it may find none but the best materials to act upon.

The habit of comprehensiveness must not be overlooked. Her mind should be trained to embrace a wide compass. Petty details must never be allowed to fill the mind at the expense of neglecting greater objects. The bent of the pupil's mind should be watched during playtime; faults that are found to be predominant should be diminished by a counteracting force. There are few things more fatal to the mind than to depend for happiness on contingent recurrence of events.

The best Queens have been most remarkable for employing great men . . . The choice of sagacious Ministers is the indication of a sagacious sovereign.

The dangers of adulation are doubled when the female character is combined with the royal.

A prince should be accustomed to see and know things as they really are and should be taught to dread that state of delusion in which the monarch is the only person ignorant of what is doing in his kingdom.

A desire of popularity is still more honest in princes than in other

men; when the means used to obtain it are strictly just, it is highly laudable. The discontents of the people should not be stifled before they reach the royal ears nor should their affection be represented as a fund which can never be drained.

The tract was read and approved in the highest circles but it is doubtful how far it influenced the character of the ill-fated child.

Of the childhood of Queen Victoria and of her descendants, innumerable stories have been told and these are to be found in books enough to fill several shelves. But this chapter is already too long and so with Princess Charlotte we say farewell to "Some Royal Children."



CHAPTER XII

Children's Books

'**T**HINK what you would have been now if instead of being fed with tales and old wives' fables in childhood, you had been crammed with geography and Natural History."

So wrote Charles Lamb to Coleridge in praise of "Goody Two-Shoes." There were books for children far back in history and, as we shall see later, Queen Catherine of Aragon was warned against tales of romance as "pestiferous books for children." But it is generally true that it was the eighteenth century which made children's books and fairy tales numerous in this country. Actually the century began rather ominously with Thomas White's "Little Book for Little Children." It was designed, among other things, to teach reading without tears, but the author continued

WHEN thou canst read, read no Ballads or foolish Books but the Bible and the "Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven," a very plain holy book for you. Get the practice of piety, Mr. Baxter's "Call to the Unconverted," "Allen's Alarum to the Unconverted." Read the Histories of the Martyrs . . . as in the "Book of Martyrs." And as you read (if the Books are your own) mark in the margent or by underlining the places

you find most relishing and take a more special knowledge of, and that most concern thee, that you may easily find them again. Read also often Treatises of Death and Hell and Judgement.

This was in 1702 and it is a relief to look forward seven years to Steele's "Tatler" and to a visit paid to children in the course of which

ON a sudden we were alarmed with the noise of a drum and immediately entered my little god-son . . . I found upon conversation with him . . . that the child had excellent parts and was a great master of all the learning on the other side of eight years old. I perceived him a very great historian of Æsop's Fables but he frankly declared to me his mind that he did not delight in that learning because he did not believe they were true.

I found he had very much turned his studies for a twelve month past into the lives and adventures of Don Belianis of Greece, Guy of Warwick, the Seven Champions and other historians of the age . . . He would tell you the mismanagement of John (Thomas) Hickathrift and find fault with the passionate temper of Sir Bevis of Southampton, and love St. George for being the Champion of England, and by this means had his thoughts insensibly moulded into the notion of discretion, virtue and honour. I was extolling his accomplishments when the mother told me that the little girl was, in her way, a better scholar than he. 'Betty deals chiefly in fairies and sprights and sometimes on a winter's night will terrify the maids with her accounts until they are afraid to go to bed.'

If it be true that the monks drove the fairies out of old England, they were sent back from the Court of Versailles. In that immense palace of sophistication, fairy tales began to provide a relief from the stiff magnificence of the Sun King and his Court. Soon fairy tales became the rage and Charles Perrault had the happy idea of setting them down in a permanent form with the pleasant explanation, whether true or not, that the stories had been told to him by his little son who had them from his nurse. Andrew Lang said once that the only really English contribution to fairyland was in the story of Jack the Slayer of Blunderbore, but, whether this is true or not, Perrault's collection of tales included Cinderella, the Sleeping Beauty, Red Riding Hood, Blue Beard, Puss in Boots, Hop o' my Thumb and so forth. These would be introduced quickly into England and even

before translation formed the material for innumerable Chap Books which were hawked about the country by wandering tradesmen called chapmen who carried also ballads and almanacks and small luxuries for women, which retail the stories in a much compressed form at prices ranging from a penny to sixpence. They were not confined to fairy tales or to those which enthralled the small boy in the "Tatler." Miss Betty's successors in the nursery would have been kept supplied, for instance, with a good range of ghost stories. There was "The Portsmouth Ghost or a Full and True Account of a Strange, Wonderful and Dreadful Appearing of the Ghost of Madame Johnson, a beautiful young Lady of Portsmouth." There was "The Guildford Ghost, being an account of the strange and amazing Apparition or Ghost of Mr. Christopher Slaughterford; with the manner of his Wonderful Appearance to Joseph Lee, his Man," and so on. The story of Jack the Giant killer or "Jack and the Giants" was available in many forms. A favourite story with boys two hundred years ago was "The History of Thomas Hickathrift."

IN the reign of William the Conqueror I have read in antient records, there lived in the Isle of Ely in Cambridgeshire, a man named Thomas Hickathrift, a poor labourer, yet he was an honest, stout man and able to do as much work in a day as two ordinary men. Having only one son he called him after his own name Thomas. The old man put his son to School but he would learn nothing. God called the old man aside, his Mother being tender of her son, maintained him by her own labour as well as she could; but all his delight was in the chimney corner, and he eat as much at once as would serve five ordinary men. At ten years old he was six feet high and three in thickness, his hand was like a shoulder of mutton, and every other part proportionable; but his great strength was yet unknown.

His strength became known by various exploits. Like all the heroes of childhood, he encountered and slew a giant, took possession of the giant's cave and the riches therein, kept a pack of hounds and

ONE day as Tom was riding, he saw a Company at Football and dismounted to see them play for a wager; but he spoiled all their sport, for, meeting the football, he gave it such a kick that they never found it more; whereupon they began to quarrel with Tom, but some of

them got little good by it; for he got a Spar which belonged to an old house that had been blown down with which he drove all opposition before him and made way wherever he came.

However Tom meets his match at last in the person of a "very sturdy Tinker having a good staff on his shoulder and a great dog to carry his budget of tools." They agree to a match.

so Tom stepped to a gate, and took a rail for a staff. To it they fell, the Tinker at Tom, and Tom at the Tinker, like two giants. The Tinker had a leather coat on, so that every blow Tom gave him made him roar again; yet the Tinker did not give way an inch, till Tom gave him such a bang on the head as felled him to the ground. Now, Tinker, where art thou? said Tom—But the Tinker, being a nimble fellow, leaped up again, and gave Tom a bang which made him reel, and following his blow, took Tom on the other side, which made him throw down his weapon, and yield the Tinker the best of it.

After this Tom took the Tinker home to his house, where we shall leave them to improve their acquaintance, and get themselves cured of the bruises they gave each other.

And, in many a family, no doubt, the battle between Tom and the Tinker was fought and re-fought for generations between small boys and big boys.

Then there was the story of Reynard the Fox

IT was when the woods was cloathed with green attjre, and the meadows adorned with fragrant flowers; when birds chaunted forth their harmonious songs, the Lion made a great feast at his palace at Sanden; and issued a proclamation for all the beasts and birds to come thereto without delay, on pain of his contempt.

Now being assembled before the King, there were some beasts found there that made great complaints against the Fox (who was absent) particularly Isegrim the Wolf who thus began:

Dread Sovereign,

I beseech thee to take pity on me and my wife, for the injuries we have sustained by that false creature Reynard the Fox; who came into my house by violence and befouled my children in such a rank manner that they became instantly blind; for which I expect from him amends, and from your Majesty justice. . . .

It is easy to imagine how eagerly the children would demand "More" of this when the reader paused. And how delightful too the possession of

THE History of Fortunatus. Containing various Surprising Adventures. Among which he acquired a purse that could not be emptied. And a Hat that carried him wherever he wished to be.

We have heard with what ardour Richard Steele's young godson read of Guy of Warwick

IN the blessed time when Athelstane wore the crown of the English nation, Sir Guy, Warwick's Mirror, and all the world's wonder, was the chief hero of the age, whose prowess so surpassed all his predecessors, that the trump of fame so loudly sounded Warwick's praise that Jews, Turks and Infidels became acquainted with his name.

Sir Bevis of Southampton had his Chapbook versions and so had "St. George the Noble Champion of England" and his adventures till he fought with the Dragon of Dunsmore Heath and slew it

BUT this proved the, most fatal of all his adventures, for the vast quantities of poison thrown upon him by that monstrous beast so infected his vital spitals that two days afterwards he died in his own house.

For girls there was the "History of the Noble Marquis of Salus and Patient Grissel" who passed triumphantly through the many tests her exacting husband made of her patience and humility "and then died in a good old age; being a pattern for all women after . . ."

No child, let us hope, would need to be told the name of the story contained in the "Old Song"

HE bade them come and go with him and look they did not cry;
And two long Miles he led them thus while they for bread complain;
Stay here, quoth he, I'll bring you bread when I do come again;
These pritty Babes, with hand in hand, went wand'ring up and down
But never more they saw the Man approaching from the Town;
Their pritty lips with Blackberries were all besmeared and dy'd
And when they saw the darksome night they laid them down and cried
In one another's arms they died as Babes wanting Relief;
No Burial these pritty Babes of any man receives
Till Robin Redbreast painfully did cover them with leaves.

And, as with many of the stories, the tale ends with a warning to "All you that be Executors made and Overseers eke" to be kind and pitiful to "Children that be Fatherless and Infants mild and meek."

Seven chapters are required for the telling of the story of Dick Whittington and the three volumes of "Robinson Crusoe" were compressed within 24 pages, telling

THE Life and Most Strange Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of the City of York, Mariner, Giving an Account how he was cast on shore by Shipwreck (None escaping but Himself) on an uninhabited Island on the Coast of America near the mouth of the Great River Oroonoke, where he lived twenty eight years, till at length he was strangely delivered by Pirates and brought home to his Native Country.

We are told how Robin Hood dealt faithfully with the Bishop of Ely

two hundred of his men were killed
And fourscore horses good;
Thirty who did as captives yield,
Were brought to the Green Wood—
Which afterwards were ransomed
For twenty marks a man.
The rest set spurs to horse and fled
To the town of Warrington.

Not the least attraction in the Chapbooks must have been their illustrations and it may be that parents found their "words in season" useful too. For instance

A TIMELY warning to Rash and Disobedient Children, being a strange and WONDERFUL RELATION of a Young Gentleman in the Parish of Stepney . . . that sold Himself to the Devil for 12 years to have the Power of being Revenged on his Father and Mother, and how, his Time being Expired, he lay in a sad and deplorable Condition to the Amazement of all Spectators.

The Chapbooks were often vulgar and often coarse and they were not very durable since they were simply folded and not stitched. But, as the eighteenth century proceeded John Newbery began to issue a series of books for children "strongly bound and gilt." Of these Charles Knight wrote

THERE is nothing more remarkable in Mr. Newbery's little books than the originality of their style. There have been attempts to approach its simplicity—its homeliness. Great authors have tried their hands at imitating its clever adaptation to the childish intellect, but they have failed. Never was failure more complete than that of Sir Walter Scott ("Tales of a Grandfather") . . . He could not sustain the difficult task of writing in the way of his prototypes, Mr. Newbery and Mr. Griffith Jones. They could carry the union of puerility and instruction through these volumes . . . The child's play was work too hard for him.

We may note the word "instruction" for it was not until much later that, in this country at least, pure faery and pure nonsense triumphed over the determination to point a moral.

Not the least interesting thing about Newbery's little books is the suggestion that "Goody Two Shoes" was written by Oliver Goldsmith and even those who are doubtful of this attribute to him the preface. Washington Irving declared that the advertisement and title page were pure Goldsmith.

WE are desired to give notice that there is in the press, and speedily will be published, either by subscription or otherwise as the public shall please to determine, the history of Little Goody Two Shoes, otherwise Mrs. Margery Two Shoes; with the means by which she acquired learning and wisdom, and in consequence thereof, her estate; set forth at large for the benefit of those

Who, from a state of rags and care,
And having shoes but half a pair,
Their fortune and their fame should fix,
And gallop in a coach and six.

The world is probably not aware of the ingenuity, humour, good sense and sly satire contained in many of the old English nursery tales. They have evidently been the sportive productions of able writers, who would not trust their names to productions that might be considered beneath their dignity. The ponderous works on which they relied for immortality have perhaps sunk into oblivion, and carried their names down with them; while their unacknowledged offsprings, "Jack the Giant Killer," "Giles Gingerbread," and "Tom Thumb," flourish in wide spreading and never ceasing popularity.

Leigh Hunt's tribute runs

BUT the most illustrious of all booksellers in our boyish days, not for his great names, . . . but for certain little penny books, radiant with gold, and rich with bad pictures, was Mr. Newbery, the famous children's bookseller, at the corner of St. Paul's Churchyard next Ludgate Street.

Southey was brought up on the Newbery books

AS soon as the child could read, his aunts' friends furnished him with literature. The son of Newbery . . . the well known publisher of "Goody Two Shoes" . . . and other such delectable histories in six-penny books for children, splendidly bound in the flowered and gilt dutch paper of former days, sent the child twenty such volumes,

and laid the foundation of Southey's library.

John Newbery was a consummate puffer of his wares. Here is an instance of 1774.

ACCORDING to Act of Parliament (neatly bound and gilt,) a *Little Pretty Pocket Book*, intended for the instruction and amusement of little Master Tommy and pretty Miss Polly; with an agreeable letter to each from *Jack the Giant Killer*; as also a *Ball and Pincushion*, the use of which will infallibly make Tommy a good boy and Polly a good girl. To the whole is prefixed a letter on education, humbly addressed to all parents, guardians, governesses, etc., wherein rules are laid down for making their children *strong, healthy, virtuous, wise, and happy*.

There followed appropriate texts from Dryden and Pope and the information

PRINTED for J. Newbery at the Bible and Crown, near Devereux Court, without Temple Bar. Price of the book 6d.; with a Ball and Pincushion 8d.

Newbery himself and the brothers Jones may have written a good many of the books. But we must not allow the eighteenth century to pass without remembering Isaac Watts, author of "Let Dogs delight to bark and bite," "Birds in their little nests agree", "How doth the little busy bee," "For Satan finds some mischief still," "'Tis the voice of

the sluggard"—and other little poems by no means banished yet from well regulated nurseries.

Round about the turn of the century women writers of books for children, whether for pleasure or for instruction or (more generally) for both, were numerous and some of them famous in other fields. Hannah More, Mrs. Barbauld, Mrs. Trimmer and Mrs. Sherwood make up a redoubtable group. What Lamb thought of two of these may be judged from a letter to Coleridge in 1802 when he seemed to be thinking of children's books for Hartley Coleridge.

MRS. BARBAULD'S stuff has banished all the old classics of the nursery; and the shopman at Newbery's hardly deigned to reach them off an old exploded corner of a shelf, when Mary asked for them. Mrs. B.'s and Mrs. Trimmer's nonsense lay in piles about. Knowledge insignificant and vapid as Mrs. B.'s books convey, it seems, must come to a child in the shape of *knowledge* and his empty noddle must be turned with conceit of his own powers when he has learnt that a Horse is an animal, and Billy is better than a horse, and suchlike; instead of that beautiful interest in wild tales which made the child a man, while all the time he suspected himself to be no bigger than a child. Science has succeeded to poetry no less in the little walks of children than with men. Is there no possibility of averting this sore evil?

Nevertheless Mrs. Trimmer could write pleasantly for children when she could forget moral purpose. Her "Easy Introduction to the Knowledge of Nature" has much information which might well please small children still, but every now and then the didactic, the cautionary or the improving note is heard. We may be too squeamish to-day to relish a bright story of what happens in the intestines of a small boy who eats green gooseberries but here she is on the subject of "sugar-plums"

AS for Sugar Plums and the rest of those foolish things, they answer no purpose in the world but to make people disrelish what is wholesome; and when they have lost all their teeth by indulging themselves with them, it will be too late to resolve against eating any more; therefore it is better to prevent the mischief by not eating any at all. I am sure I would not part with one tooth for all the sweet meats in the world.

It is easy to imagine the depressing effect of this kind of thing on a nursery at any period.

As for Mrs. Sherwood's masterpiece quite mild old gentlemen have been known to say the most ferocious things about what they would have liked to be able to do to Mr. Fairchild; and Ruskin, in whose Sunday evening reading her "Lady of the Manor" was included, said "It was a very awful book to me because of the stories in it of wicked girls who had gone to balls, dying immediately after of fever." Then of course there were the Taylor sisters and the little boy of whom they wrote that he "lounged about all day"

IN vain his mother's kind advice,
In vain his master's care,
He followed every idle vice
And learned to curse and swear!

And think you, when he grew a man,
He prospered in his ways?
No—wicked courses never can
Bring good and happy days.

Without a shilling in his purse,
Or cot to call his own,
Poor Thomas grew from bad to worse,
And hardened as a stone.

And oh it grieves me much to write
His melancholy end!
Then let us leave the dreadful sight
And thoughts of pity send.

But may we this important truth
Observe and ever hold,
That most who're idle in their youth
Are wicked when they're old.

This little poem seems to sum up completely the entertainment designed for children when we were fighting Napoleon.

But there were deeper depths since Mrs. Trimmer herself seems to

have got into trouble for appearing to sanction Cinderella as a story for children. A correspondent dealt with her very faithfully, denouncing poor Cinderella as

PERHAPS one of the most exceptionable books that was ever written for children. It paints the worst passions that can enter the human heart and of which little children should if possible be always ignorant; such as envy, jealousy, a dislike for . . . half-sisters, vanity, a love of dress, etc.

Meanwhile children were choosing their own books to some extent. Neither "Gulliver's Travellers," nor "Robinson Crusoe," nor the "Arabian Nights" were intended primarily as books for children, but these, together with poetry like "The Epitaph on a Mad Dog" and "John Gilpin," became and remained favourites in the nursery. To "Robinson Crusoe" J. S. Mill added, from his recollections of childhood, "The Arabian Nights," "Don Quixote," and Miss Edgeworth's "Popular Tales." Not that Miss Edgeworth can be acquitted of a didactic strain, for her stories for children were intended as a commentary on her father's educational theories but her genius shone and shines still through the "serious meaning." This also is true of what Charles and Mary Lamb wrote even if "the moral" was not always lacking.

It is with quite a small and unambitious book written by a father to amuse his son, that we touch again the spirit of pure fantasy which "the monks" or the Puritans, or both had driven out of England. This was "The Butterfly's Ball and the Grasshopper's Feast" by Thomas Rescoe for his son.

COME take up your hats and away let us haste
To the Butterfly's ball and the Grasshopper's feast.
The trumpeter Gad-fly has summoned the crew,
And the revels are now only waiting for you.

On the smooth shaven grass by the side of the wood,
Beneath a broad oak that for ages has stood,
See the children of earth and the tenants of air,
For an evening's amusement together repair.

And so trippingly to a measure to which Titania might have danced to the last stanza

Then as evening gave way to the shadows of night,
The watchman, the glow-worm, came out with his light.
Then home let us hasten while yet we can see,
For no watchman is waiting for you and for me.

Dating back nearly to the beginning of the century the little poem went through many editions and, in a sense, may be said to have ushered in the Golden Century of nonsense and fantasy. Just as, from the over sophisticated Court of Versailles, came the revival of fairyland, so from the industrial age in England and on the Continent came Grimm and Andersen and Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll and whole bookshelves full of fantasy and of the fairy tales of the world. Inevitably there came a reaction: fairy tales, we are assured, are no longer first favourites in the nurseries and the schoolrooms. But a great flood of children's books was pouring from the presses. Illustrators played their part. No one can read that delicious piece of eighteenth century fooling, which also, by the way, was not intended for children:

so she went into the garden to cut a cabbage leaf, to make an apple-pie; and at the same time a great she bear, coming up the street, pops its head into the shop, 'What! no soap?' So he died and she very imprudently married the barber; and there were present the Piccaninies and the Joblilies and the Garyulies, and the Grand Panjandrum himself, with the little round button at the top; and they all fell playing the game of catch as catch can, till the gunpowder ran out at the heels of their boots

without *seeing* the Panjandrum; though to be sure there is something curiously suggestive of the methods of the Ministry of Food and the Board of Trade about the whole thing to-day. Who can forget the Struwwelpeter illustrations? There were Caldecott and Kate Greenaway. Even the two Alices gained something from Tenniel's pen. Composers have done a good deal too especially with fairy tales like the "Three Bears."

Then there have been all the tales of adventure from "Treasure

Island" and "Kidnapped" downwards and hundreds of books about boys' schools and girls' schools and books nourishing the Imperial idea like those of Henty.

Do children's tastes really alter very much from one generation to another? Is "Water Babies" out of fashion? Have children no affection now for Blake's "Songs of Innocence"? Is it any less true now than it was a hundred years ago that Cinderella stands first among nursery favourites and that the grown up who can read "Red Riding Hood" with all the proper inflections is sure of a welcome "up-stairs" especially if she has "the Owl and the Pussy Cat" for light relief? I remember a little girl (no longer a little girl) who would listen to "The Sleeping Beauty" forty times a day if anyone would go on telling it to her. For the moment aeroplanes and tanks may seem to be the preoccupation of childhood but the fairies will come back as they have come before.





CHAPTER XIII

Toys, Games, Sports

OF the toys of children a century ago and, indeed, of centuries further back still, there is an excellent outline by Charles Dickens in *The Cricket on the Hearth* introducing us to Caleb Plummer, maker of toys, and his blind daughter, a dolls' dressmaker

. . . a strange place it was. There were houses in it, finished and unfinished, for Dolls of all stations in life. Suburban tenements for Dolls of moderate means; kitchens and single apartments for Dolls of the lower classes; capital town residences for Dolls of high estate. Some of these establishments were already furnished according to estimate, with a view to the convenience of Dolls of limited income; others could be fitted on the most expensive scale, at a moment's notice, from whole shelves of chairs and tables, sofas, bedsteads and upholstery. The nobility and gentry and public in general for whose accommodation these tenements were designed, lay, here and there, in baskets, staring straight up at the ceiling; but, in denoting their degrees in Society (and confining them to their respective stations) . . . the makers of these Dolls had far improved on Nature, who is

often forward and perverse for they, not resting on such arbitrary marks as satin cotton-print and bits of rag, had superadded striking personal differences which allowed of no mistake. Thus, the Doll-lady of distinction had wax limbs of perfect symmetry . . . The next grade in the social scale being made of leather, and the next of coarse linen stuff. As to the common-people, they had just so many matches out of tinder-boxes, for their arms and legs, and there they were, established in their sphere at once, beyond the possibility of getting out of it.

But there were toys of many other kinds in Caleb Plummer's workshop

THERE were Noah's Arks, in which the Birds and Beasts were an uncommonly tight fit, I assure you; . . . By a bold poetical license most of these Noah's Arks had knockers on their doors . . . There were scores of melancholy little carts, which, when the wheels went round, performed most doleful music. Many small fiddles, drums and other instruments of torture; no end of cannon, shields, swords, spears and guns. There were little tumblers in red breeches, incessantly swarming up high obstacles of red tape, and coming down, head first, on the other side; and there were innumerable old gentlemen of respectable, not to say venerable appearance, insantly flying over horizontal pegs, inserted for the purpose, in their own street doors. There were beasts of all sorts; horses, in particular, of every breed, from the spotted barrel on four pegs, with a small tippet for a mane, to the thoroughbred rocker on his highest mettle. . . .

A child of to-day might miss the modern constructions, product of the age of steam and electricity, and yet, turn a child of to-day loose in Caleb Plummer's workshop and he or she would find delight enough and to spare. Nothing is more true than that it is not the most elaborate toys which are children's prime favourites; it is the Grown-ups who play with them while the children look on.

Dickens had a special fondness for the character of the Dolls' Dressmaker, for we meet her again, in *Our Mutual Friend*, in the Person of the House whose occupation Bradley Headstone, the schoolmaster, could not guess, for some time.

"I'M a Dolls' Dressmaker."

"I hope it's a good business."

The person of the house shrugged her shoulders and shook her

head. "No. Poorly paid. And I'm often so pressed for time! I had a doll married last week, and was obliged to work all night. . . ."

"I am sorry your fine ladies are so inconsiderate."

"It's the way with them . . . And they take no care of their clothes, and they never keep to the same fashions a month. I work for a doll with three daughters. Bless you, she's enough to ruin her husband!"

Of dolls in books, there is the one with which Jane Eyre comforted herself, a much less gorgeous affair than that of Georgina Reed for which the nurse "began making a new bonnet from a certain little drawer, full of splendid shreds of silk and satin." Jane, left alone upstairs when there was a party at Mrs. Reed's house

SAT with my doll on my knee, till the fire got low, glancing round occasionally to make sure that nothing worse than myself haunted the shadowy room; and when the embers sank to a dull red, I undressed hastily, tugging at knots and strings as I best might, and sought shelter from cold and darkness in my crib. To this crib I always took my doll; human beings must have something, and in the dearth of worthier objects of affection, I contrived to find a pleasure in loving and cherishing a faded graven image, shabby as a miniature scarecrow. It puzzles me now to remember with what absurd sincerity I doated on this little toy, half fancying it alive and capable of sensation. I could not sleep unless it was folded in my night-gown; and when it lay there safe and warm, I was comparatively happy, believing it to be happy likewise.

Very different was the attitude of Maggie Tulliver in *The Mill on the Floss* and Maggie Tulliver was believed to be to some extent a self-portrait of George Eliot's childhood. We read that for Maggie, at nine years old,

THE attic was a favourite retreat on a wet day . . . here she fretted out all her ill humours . . . and here she kept a Fetish which she punished for all her misfortunes. This was the trunk of a large wooden doll which once stared with the roundest of eyes above the reddest of cheeks but was now entirely defaced by a long career of vicarious suffering. Three nails driven into the head commemorated as many crises in Maggie's nine years of earthly struggle; that luxury of vengeance having been suggested to her by the picture of Jael destroying Sisera in the old Bible.

If it was the Bible which decided the fate of Maggie Tulliver's dolls it was Virgil who separated Jane Welsh (Carlyle) from a cherished doll. She tells us that her tutor, Edward Irving, thought that playing with dolls was beneath the dignity of Latin scholarship and so

WITH her dresses which were many and sumptuous, her four posted bed, a faggot or two of cedar allumettes, a few sticks of cinnamon and a nutmeg, I . . . constructed her funeral pile . . . and this new Dido being placed in the bed with my help, spoke through my lips the sad last words of Dido the First which I had then all by heart . . . The doll having thus spoken, kindled the pile and stabbed herself with a penknife by way of Tyrian sword. Then, however, in the moment of seeing my poor doll blaze up for, being stuffed with bran, she took fire and was all over in no time, in that supreme moment my affection for her blazed up also and I shrieked and would have saved her, and could not, and went on shrieking till everybody within hearing flew to me and bore me off in a plunge of tears.

But accident was more often the cause of such losses. Sometimes, as in Kingsley's touching little poem about the doll which had been trodden on by a cow among other misfortunes, it still remained "For old sakes sake" "The prettiest doll in the world." Sometimes little, if anything, remained especially when wax dolls were ousting wooden ones and owners did not always realize the special dangers to which wax was exposed. In poetry for children of the early 19th century there is a good deal about dolls, and here is one relating a catastrophe with a moral, for all children's poetry of that age must have an improving moral

OF Blanchidine's vast stock of pretty toys
A wooden doll her every thought employs,
Its neck so white, so smooth, its cheeks so red,
She'd kiss, she'd hug, she'd take it to her bed.

Mama now brought her home a Doll of wax,
Its hair in ringlets, white and soft as flax;
Its eyes could open and its eyes could shut
And on it with much taste its clothes were put.
"My dear Wax Doll," sweet Blanchidine would cry—
Her doll of wood was thrown neglected by.

One summer day—'twas in the month of June—
The sun blazed out in all the heat of noon:
“My waxen doll,” she cried, “my dear, my charm,
You feel quite cold but you shall soon be warm.”
She placed it in the sun, misfortune dire,
The wax ran down as if before the fire;
Each beauteous feature quickly disappeared
And melting left a blank, all soiled and smeared.

This, no doubt, was read to any little girl who envied a friend's possession of a wax doll.

A more fortunate little girl was Miss Agnes

MISS AGNES had two or three dolls and a box
To hold all their bonnets and tippets and frocks;
In a red leather thread case that snapped when it shut
She had needles to sew with and scissors to cut.

On the other hand

MISS JENNY and Polly
Had each a new dolly
With rosy red cheeks and blue eyes,
Drest in ribbons and gauze
And they quarrelled because
The dolls were not both of a size.

One such quarrel resulted disastrously

THEY took her waxen doll one day,
And banged it round and round,
They tore its legs and arms away
And threw them on the ground.

Queen Victoria's famous dolls belong now to the national collection.

But it is not only girls who have devoted much of their childhood to dolls. To take one example, Edmund Gosse, in *Father and Son* relates how, when he was about five or six years old,

I HAD three dolls to whom my attitude was not very intelligible. Two of these were female, one with a shapeless face of rags, the other in wax. But in my fifth year, when the Crimean war broke out, I was given a third doll, a soldier, dressed very smartly in a scarlet cloth

tunic. I used to put the dolls on three chairs and harangue them aloud but my sentiment to them was never confidential, until our maid servant one day, intruding on my audience and misunderstanding the occasion of it, said "What? a boy and playing with a soldier when he's got two lady dolls to play with?" I had never thought of my dolls as confidantes before but from that time forth I paid a special attention to the soldier, in order to make up to him for Lizzie's unwarrantable insult.

But for his mother's iron will, Ruskin might have been among boys who played with dolls.

THE law was that I should find my own amusement; no toys were at first allowed and the pity of my Croydon aunt for my monastic poverty in this respect was boundless. On one of my birthdays, thinking to overcome my mother's resolution by splendour of temptation, she bought the most beautiful Punch and Judy she could find, as big as a real Punch and Judy, all dressed in scarlet and gold, and that would dance, tied to the leg of a chair. I must have been greatly impressed, for I remember well the look of the two figures as my aunt herself exhibited their virtues. My mother was obliged to accept them, but afterwards quietly told me it was not right I should have them and I never saw them again.

So much for dolls. Of toys generally in Ruskin's childhood he tells us

I HAD a bunch of keys to play with as long as I was capable only of pleasure in what glittered and jingled. As I grew older I had a cart and a ball and, when I was five or six, two boxes of well cut wooden bricks. With these modest but, I still think, entirely sufficient possessions and being always summarily whipped if I cried, did not do as I was bid or tumbled down the stairs, I soon attained serene and secure methods of life and motion and could pass my days contentedly in tracing the squares and comparing the colours of my carpet.

There is a reminiscence of Queen Victoria's earliest memories in these last words.

From time immemorial soldiers, whether of wood or of metal, have played an important part among boyhood's toys though, as we noted in the case of Parnell, girls directed toy armies too. The age of steam modified interest in toy horses and carts (though every self-respecting nursery continued to have its dapple grey rocking horse).

But, first clockwork, then steam and then electric trains became the rage. More than half a century ago I can remember getting into trouble with my grand-mother for coming in wet and bedraggled from trying to sail a boat on the Round Pond; the rebukes beginning with my general appearance and ending with a culminating: "*And your nails!*" Little boys 'sail more ambitious navies in peace time in Kensington Gardens now and I don't suppose that trouble awaits them when they get home. Then of course the modern boy has a box from which he can construct cranes and all kinds of modern wonders and, like Ruskin, he has his box of bricks though he prefers his machines and his aeroplanes.

For games there is plenty of record down from Tudor times' Fitzstephen bids us

COME to the sports and pastimes, seeing it fit that a city should not only be commodious and serious, but also merry and sportful . . . Every year at Shrove Tuesday, that we may begin with children's sports, seeing we all have been children, the schoolboys do bring cocks of the game to their master, and all the forenoon they delight themselves in cock-fighting; after dinner, all the youths go into the field to play at the ball. The scholars of every school have their ball, or baston, in their hands, the ancient and wealthy men of the city come forth on horseback to see the sport . . . and to take part of the pleasure in beholding their agility.

Among other amusements we are told that

IN the holidays all the summer the youths are exercised in leaping, dancing, shooting, wrestling, casting the stone, and practising their shields; the maidens trip in their timbrels and dance as long as they can well see.

In those days opportunities for winter sports were numerous for London boys.

WHEN the great fen, or moor, which watereth the walls of the city on the north side, is frozen, many young men play upon the ice; some, striding as wide as they may do slide swiftly; others make themselves seats of ice as great as mill stones; one sits down, many, hand in hand, do draw him, and one slipping on a sudden, all fall together; some tie

bones to their feet and under their heels; and shoving themselves by a little picked staff do slide as swiftly as a bird flieth in the air, or an arrow out of a cross-bow.

They had all sorts of games and mimic fights on the river and for summer we hear that "leaping, dancing, shooting, wrestling," went on. And for the girls there used once to be dancing for garlands "hung athwart the streets."

Probably most games still played are of great antiquity though the modern boy uses a bicycle where the boys of previous centuries used horses and ponies as Strutt tells us, writing in the 18th century,

MOST boys are exceedingly delighted with riding either on horses or in carriages and also upon men's shoulders which we have already seen to be a very ancient sport and I trust there are but few of my readers who have not seen them with a bough substituted for a horse and highly pleased in imitating the galloping and prancing of that noble animal.

What has become of those gay sets of harness with their tinkling bells nowadays? It is rarely indeed that we meet the "prancing and galloping" children of other years. Even hoops seem to be going out of fashion now in favour of roller skates. In the 18th century complaints were made of "boys with their hoops in the public streets who are sometimes very troublesome to those who are passing through them." No doubt one travels faster on roller skates. But some of the old games are still in favour though one would not expect to hear a modern Buzfuz describing a lad's melancholy in terms of marbles. Marbles are played still but not to anything like the extent of the past; perhaps there is not room for them any longer. But leap-frog shows no sign of going out of fashion; one still occasionally sees boys on stilts and most of the old indoor games like hunt the slipper, blind man's buff and so forth have their votaries, young and old. Air balloons were quite popular at the seaside down to the beginning of the war. I well remember how, on cold mornings at home our mother used to incite us to make a ring in the dining-room and play battledore and shuttlecock; one never heard of badminton in those days.

Carlyle's professor discovered that

IN all the sports of children, were it only in their wanton breakages and defacements, you shall discern a creative instinct; the mankin feels that he is a born man, that his vocation is to work. The choicest present you can make him is a Tool; be it knife or pen-gun, for construction or for destruction; either way it is for work, for change. In gregarious sports of skill or strength, the boy trains himself to co-operation, for war or peace, as governor or governed.

Much of that looks forward to the Meccano set and the model aeroplane—"construction or destruction." No doubt, in some form or another Hare and Hounds and playground games like Prisoners' Base and some variety of Hopscotch are played still and there are mysterious chalkings on pavements—mysterious at least to old fogeys.

Roger North has a pleasant note on games played at Bury St. Edmunds in the 17th century.

THE town was then my grandfather's, consisting of tillage farms and small dairies, so that business was usually done by noon, and it was always the custom for the youth of the town, who were men or maid servants, and children to assemble after horses—baiting, either upon the Green or (after haysel) in a close accustomed to be so used, and there all to play till milking time, and supper at night. The men to football, and the maids, with whom we children commonly mixed, being not proof for the turbulence of the other party, to stoolball, and such running games as they knew.

He went next to the Free School of Thetford where we learn that

I WAS not very athletic, yet stood not out in any such exercise, but pleased myself more in manufactures and gimcracks . . . I had several manufactures going, as lanterns of paper, balls, and thread purses, which brought in some money. I had got a trick to make fireworks, as serpents, which being strongly bound and the composition little abated with cold, would act very impetuously.

He adds that they were all "expert boatmen, swimmers, and fishers." The end of the 18th century was the period of "cautionary" verse for children and there was hardly anything they could do which did not involve terrible dangers. If they went skating they were reminded of

the many people who had been drowned by the ice breaking. If they played on a swing:

WHIRL went the ropes so rapid was the bound.
The school boy was thrown out and there was found
Full three hours after bleeding on the ground.

Then there was the see-saw

I TOLD you this play would surely some day
Some accident cause, and now see.
A bone is soon broke and then 'tis no joke,
Be in future both governed by me.

Boys have always played with tops but the mentor "knew a little boy who nearly lost one of his toes by a violent blow" from a peg-top. "Little masters" were warned of the dangers of cricket:

A MANLY exercise but full of adroitness. It is only fit for athletes of strong constitution. It requires great labour, a constant quick motion of the body and causes a profusion of sweat . . . The secret pleasure in this exercise is to prove yourself a better man, but take care you do not over-play your part and instead of excelling, work your ruin and destruction.

Even in those days it was not very safe to cross the road and as a change from the kind of caution given to pedestrians to-day, there might be quoted the lines written about "Miss Helen" in the early 19th century:

MISS HELEN was always too giddy to heed
What her mother had told her to shun,
For frequently over the street at full speed
She would cross where the carriages run.

It will be guessed that Miss Helen came to a sad end.

Probably it is true that of field games sixty years ago, cricket and football were supreme. A young fellow would have other "manly accomplishments," boxing, perhaps cross country running and certainly rowing and swimming but lawn tennis was still the game for the few; hockey had not anything like its present vogue. It is told of Horace Hutchinson that when his mother asked a Scots uncle whether it was

too early for the boy to start golf at seven, the answer was "He's lost two years already." But that was a Scots view and probably most English boys still thought of the game as one for old gentlemen. I certainly did and was properly punished when, much too late, I began to try to play. It happened that my father had been an athlete of some note at Rugby and at Oxford and he saw to it that his sons had opportunities, especially for cricket. I cannot remember the time when I first began to play and to dream of greatness in the intervals of glowering on the Hove ground at Grace and other monsters who used to trounce the Sussex bowling. I never could have excelled on account of lameness but I think that parents of those days were wise in ignoring such handicaps. It was years before I realised my own, and I should have lost many days of happiness if I had been told that games involving running and quickness of foot were not for me though I did reach my House Eleven and my school second eleven. Nowadays there are far more alternatives for a boy who is lame or otherwise handicapped but then if one could not play cricket and football and there was no rowing available, one was a good deal out of the picture and perhaps in danger of incurring the kind of reputation which one finds in one of Mary Mitford's stories of 19th century England.

A BOY afraid of getting his feet wet for fear of catching cold, or of going without his hat lest he should spoil his complexion. He wraps half a dozen silk handkerchiefs about his neck because he is subject to sore throats. Wears kid gloves at cricket for fear his hands should chap and wraps his feet in woollen socks because he once had a chilblain.

Girls nowadays play all manner of games from cricket to squash rackets, they maintain quite a number of eights and fours on various rivers and, in fact, the day is long past when it was sufficient to say, with Carlyle's professor: "the little maid, provident of her domestic destiny, takes with preference to dolls." But emancipation came slowly. That terrible crocodile walk was thought exercise enough for school-girls for many years, though Miss Buss was not so "different from us" of the present day as to fail to see the advantages of the gymnasium

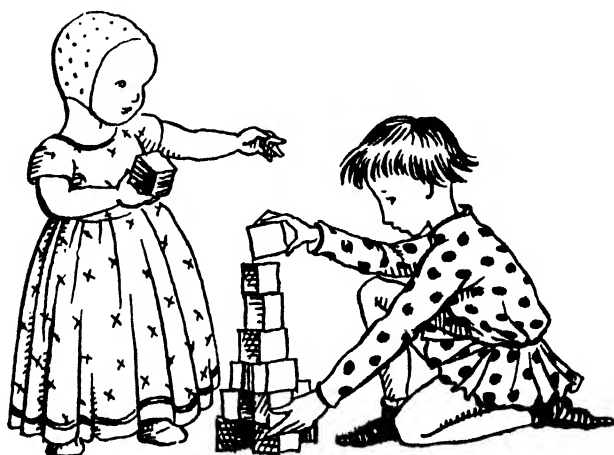
and even the fives' court. Skipping and dancing and croquet were thought to be suitable for girls and they were taught to ride rather as a legacy from the days when it was a necessity. It was unfortunate for a girl to get the reputation, very easily earned, of being a tom-boy, a type which goes back a long way in history. For instance there is the letter which "a widower with but one daughter" wrote to Mr. Spectator in August 1712:

SHE was by Nature much enclined to be a Romp and I had no way of educating her, but commanding a young Woman, whom I entertained to take Care of her, to be very watchful in her Care and Attendance about her. I am a Man of Business and obliged to be much abroad. The Neighbours have told me, that in my Absence our Maid has let in the Spruce Servants in the neighbourhood to Junketings, while my Girl played and romped even in the Street. To tell you the plain Truth I caught her once, at eleven years old, at Chuck-farthing among the Boys.

And with that cry from an outraged parent we may close the subject of toys and games.

Sir Thomas More would not have liked his daughters to grow up "Romps" but he was all for a joyous childhood

TAKE them as little babes untaught and give them fair words and pretty proper gear, rattles and cockbells and gay, golden shoes, such pretty plays as children be wont to play . . .





CHAPTER XIV

Dress

THIS is not a history of costume and, though there have been many excellent books written on the subject, it might be argued perhaps that the best way of studying English child costume is in the portraits of children to be seen in Church effigies or in prints or in our galleries in normal times and in reproductions of those which have been sold across the Atlantic or lost in accidental fires or by enemy action.

Here we can only glance at a few types. We know something for instance about infant wardrobes from the bitter complaint which the Princess Elizabeth's nurse sent to Thomas Cromwell after the execution of the child's mother.

SHE hath neither gown nor kirtle, nor petticoat, nor no manner of linen—nor forsmocks (chemises), nor kerchiefs, nor rails (night-dresses), nor body stichets (stays), nor handkerchiefs, nor sleeves, nor mufflers (mobcaps), nor biggerns (nightcaps). All these her grace must take. . . .

From this it may be gathered, as seems to be true, that, over a long period, children were dressed more or less in the style of their elders.

In the Stuart period there is something to be learnt about clothes from the memoirs of the time. In the Verney family, for instance, we get some information about a schoolboy's outfit

MR. DENTON, the Taylor, have brought me a suite of closes of the same clothe that my cloke is off; he hath also brought me a sote with a pair of upper stokings, and a paire under reade stockings . . . I doe lake some blacke rubin for to make me some cuffe strings and shoo stringes. I have bought already one paire of each, but they are now almost worne out and therefore I shall take one paire of shoostings against chrismas, whether I goe to London or no . . . It costeth me but a grote a yarde. I doe also take a hatt against chrismas, for my oulde hatt which I have now is full of holes in the crowne of itt.

Schools like Winchester and Eton had a uniform in the shape of a long gown closed in front and fastened at neck and wrists.

SUCH a garment was not a mere adjunct to ordinary clothes intended to distinguish boys maintained by a royal or episcopal founder, but a real protection against the cold. The hood attached to it could be drawn over the head when necessary.

The Verney Memoirs tell us something about girls' clothes in the 17th century. We learn, for instance that, in 1647, a certain Miss Betty "wants clothes from heade to foote, both woollen and linnen." Lady Verney suggests an allowance of £12 a year, not illiberal in terms of our money but explains

ALL heere keeps their daughters in silke. Ye doctor's wife ye other day made new silke gowns for all her daughters and I assure you Betty doth not pointe at wearing any other, and truly I cannot imagion which way you can keepe her in silke at thatt rate.

When the family was in exile in France we hear of the need for

6 fine night capps laced, marked V in blacke silke and 2 fine nighte capps plaine; 4 new plaine capps marked V in blew silke, shirts with lace; new cambrick double ruffles; 5 paires of little Holland cuffles. 3 paires cambrick double boot hose; fine Holland handkerchers; 2 Tufted Fustian dressing waistcoates; 4 face napkins; 2 handkerchers; and two paires of old linnen stockings.

In another letter we hear of the purchase for "ye child" of "A Morelly coate, striped yellow and black and some lace for capps."

Evidently special arrangements were necessary to keep children's feet dry on the roads of the period.

PRAY send one of your shoes to Ailesbury or Buckingham to have a paire of Cloggs fitted to itt that you may walke about without taking in wett at your feet.

Once more the replenishment of a girl's wardrobe is needed

SHE must have stoff to make her a petycoat to her night gown; her olde callicow petycoat I shall leve as far as it will go and she must have five or seven of the narrow laces which Bell has on hers and black silke to make it up. Bell must bespeak a paire of black leather shoes for her and charge the woman to make them stronge, the very sole of her shoes is worn off. She would have them handsome as well as stronge. She runs much about and it is better to wear out her clothes than to be sickly.

A very modern point of view, in peace time anyhow.

A young child is being sent on a journey and precautions must be taken.

LETT him be sett upon a pillow and wrapped extreemly warme with one of the little credle ruggs and a mantle about him. A pair of russett shoes, presently lined with Bais, the sole within the shoe, to keep him warm.

For a wedding

PINK coloured fringed gloves or white coloured lace gloves (are ordered) for a girl and sky coloured fringed gloves for a boy. White gloves trimmed with green for my little neeces.

A girl of fifteen writes home asking for

A CLOTH gown. I know my mourning will cost a good deale of money but I beleeve you would have me mourn handsomely for so deere a brother. I beg that I may have a tipit bought me since every gentlewoman has one as makes any show in the world; it will cost £5 at least.

Mention of seventeenth century mourning clothes for children recalls the curious fashion in court circles. In the *Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier* there is an account of conversation between her and Louis XIV.

THE day after Louis XIV and the Queen of France went to St. Cloud to perform the customary ceremonial of asperging the body of Henrietta of England, Duchess of Orleans, I paid a visit to her daughter. I was dressed in my mourning veil and mantle. I found that my young cousin had with her the daughter of the Duke of York . . . They were both very little, yet Monsieur, who delighted in all ceremonies, had made them wear the usual mourning veils for adults which trailed behind them on the ground. I told the King of this ridiculous mourning next day and described to him the mantles worn by his niece and the little English Princess.

Boys of that period, and earlier and later, wore their ordinary clothes when playing games. Thus, in a church near Lichfield there is an effigy, going back to the beginning of the Tudor period, of a boy killed when playing ball; he is shown with the ball in his hand pointing to the place behind his ear where he was struck; he is wearing the ankle length tunic of the time. There is a picture of James, Duke of York, playing tennis; he is wearing what would be an ordinary dress of breeches and boots with lace at the tops, something like a long pointed sleeved waistcoat with lace cuffs and collar. It may be noted that the Founder of Harrow School gave special directions for the neatness of the boys who must not appear, "uncombed, unwashed, ragged and slovenlike."

Before we go further, we ought perhaps to glance at the apron or pinafore, the first article of dress mentioned in the Bible and the least likely probably ever to disappear especially from the dress of girls. It was in the matter of her pinafores that Maggie Tulliver vexed her mother so much and it is not uncommon to hear reference made to the days when a girl was "still in pinafores." Carlyle's Professor was lyrical about aprons

APRONS are Defences; against injury to cleanliness, to safety, to modesty, sometimes to roguery

And so forth at great length. They were as essential in the royal nursery as in the council house or the village cottage. For boys they used to be matched by the smock frock. Looking at old pictures of boys at play, it appears that, as in the effigy of the boy who lost his life playing ball, they were originally quite long; but the farmer's boy, like Cobbett, of a later period wore a shorter smock with perhaps corduroy or even leather breeches, probably cut down from an old pair of his father's, the great essential being a material that would wear. If the boy was lucky, he might have a pair of boots too, even if in a somewhat dilapidated state. Pretty early in the 19th century village swains were all for getting rid of their smocks, when going courting, in favour of ready made or rustic made coat and trousers, and it seems that, at some Mayday festivals, there was some sumptuary line drawn between those who came in smock frocks and those who came in suits. Nowadays the smock is comparatively rare though there have been attempts to revive it.

In days past, the great occasion for the small girls of the countryside was Sunday. Many a time in the eighteen-nineties, I have marvelled at the sight of the four or five little daughters of a farm labourer to whom, when learning the business of farming, I had paid eleven or twelve shillings as his weekly wage, coming out from their cottage on their way to Church or Chapel on Sundays, scrubbed till their faces shone, their hair tied with some bright ribbon, in spotless white, starched frocks—what love, what labour, what self-denial had gone to that parade! The silliest thing ever said about the "poor" is "At least it costs nothing to be clean." Sunday parade on a Norfolk farm in those days was answer enough.

Perhaps, if we go up the social scale a little, the great difference between present and past is to be found in the overdressing of children in other days. Let us take a peep into the nursery of Queen Victoria just a hundred years ago. One of the Queen's maids of honour wrote in her Diary a description of a visit to the nursery which then contained the Princess Royal (afterwards the Empress Frederick) and the Prince of Wales (Edward VII).

THE children are both much grown and improved. The Princess Royal is a darling; she was in immense spirits and showed off to great advantage. She runs about now, talks at any rate and was delighted with two new frocks the Duchess of Kent had sent her as a Christmas box. She took first one and then the other and showed them to each of us and then she desired me to put one on, which was not so practicable as I could have wished; but I held it up for her to her great delight. She is very fat and was dressed in a dark blue velvet frock, with little white shoes, muslin sleeves gathered tight to her arms and yellow kid mittens.

Nowadays the rule seems to be for as few clothes and as much freedom as possible recalling Teufelsdröckh and

MY first short clothes were of yellow serge; or rather I should say, my first short cloth, for the vesture was one and indivisible, reaching from neck to ankle, a mere body with four limbs; of which fashion how little could I then divine the architecture, how much less the moral significance. . . .

Questions which, fortunately, do not worry small boys and girls to-day.

Yet the change to more freedom of movement for children had begun during the 18th century and the portraits of children of the period do often show the little girls in loose frocks and sensible hats. There is a pleasant 1808 print of boys playing with some girls all of whom are bareheaded. The boys have wide brimmed low crown hats, very high waisted trousers not quite reaching the ankles and shirts frilled and open at the neck. The period of stays and many petticoats for little children was dying or dead. Hoppner's portrait of the Princess Sophia shows her with a small black silk cape. Fanny Burney meets the little Princess Amelia on Windsor Castle Terrace "in a robe coat covered with fine muslin, a dressed close cap, white gloves and a fan," which, as with Victoria's daughter, sounds a little overdressed for a three-year-old.

There is a pleasant picture of George III's young daughters.

ONE should not imagine that girls of ten, eight and seven in polonaises with the hair dressed on high cushions, with stiff large curls powdered and potamumed, small dress caps and diamond ornaments

set in formal manner such as stars etc. could look well in such a costume but in fact they did and it became them extremely. Princess Mary, who is a lovely elegant made child, was dressed in a lace frock with a blue silk coat.

And there were still some strange fashions to come, the long pantalettes showing beneath the skirts, for instance, and even modified hoops.

One of the unpleasantest boys in fiction is presented to us by Charles Dickens on the morning on which *Oliver Twist* was picked up in Barnet by

as dirty a juvenile as one would wish to see . . . His hat was stuck on the top of his head so lightly that it threatened to fall off every moment . . . He wore a man's coat which reached nearly to his heels. He had turned the cuffs back half way up his arm, to get his hands out of the sleeves apparently with the ultimate purpose of thrusting them into the pockets of his corduroy trousers . . . He was altogether as roystering and swaggering a young gentleman as ever stood four feet six—or something less—in his bluchers. . . .

Boys' dress generally was affected by school rules. Already mention has been made of the monastic habits worn at Eton and Winchester. The great London schools had their special uniform as with "The Blue Coat" school and the Charterhouse. As late as 1859 the Prince Consort struck out a new line by inventing a semi-military uniform for Wellington College on the ground that anything like an ecclesiastic or monastic garb would be unsuited to that foundation. To this day nearly all public schools have some kind of sumptuary rules, but the private schools, with which we are more concerned here, often allow more latitude.

In Victorian days (and probably earlier) the size of families and the stoutness of the material from which clothes were made gave rise to some feeling among the younger members, for there was a steady system of devolution and a suit originally made for the eldest son would reach his juniors in turn till the youngest loathed the very sight of it. Lower down the scale it would be the parent's clothes which descended in this way. Elaborate blazers, caps, scarves and so

forth are a modern idea, though I remember organising a "works" cricket team, challenging a neighbouring village and being asked whether my team played in "whites."

Returning to girls, poor Jane Eyre had to watch the Reed children being "dressed out in thin muslin frocks and scarlet sashes with hair elaborately ringletted." Presently she began to hear something of school uniform when Mr. Brocklehurst explains to Mrs. Reed how he inculcates the virtue of humility at Lowood

MY second daughter, Augusta, went with her mama to visit the school and on her return she exclaimed: Oh, dear papa, how quiet and plain all the girls look; with their hair combed behind their ears, and their long pinafores, and those little holland pockets outside their frocks they are almost like poor people's children and . . . they looked at my dress and mama's as if they had never seen a silk gown before.

When Jane Eyre first sees the school assembled she finds

A QUIANT assemblage . . . all with plain locks combed from their faces, not a curl visible; in brown dresses, made high and surrounded by a narrow tucker about the throat, with little pockets of holland (shaped something like a Highlander's purse) tied in front of their frocks, and designed to serve the purpose of a work bag; all too wearing woollen stockings and countrymade shoes, fastened with brass buckles.

If Miss Buss failed to introduce uniform to her own school, something like uniformity has become the rule with most girls' schools and, in 1941, there was an interesting little newspaper discussion on the subject; some supporting the uniform, others disagreeing. The general argument in favour of uniform is that it gives no ground for differences between girls from richer or poorer homes.

Something remains to be said of the rather curious habit of dressing little boys as soldiers, sailors, Highlanders and so forth. "Dressing up" little boys was always an amusement for mothers, not always appreciated by the boys themselves. When William Duke of Gloucester, Queen Anne's son, was only seven or eight, she had him dressed for her birthday.

IN a most marvellous suit of clothes. The coat was azure blue velvet, then the colour of the mantle of the Garter. All the button holes of

this garment were encrusted with diamonds, and the buttons were composed of great brilliants. The King himself had given his aid towards the magnificence of this grand costume. His Majesty presented him with a jewel of St. George on horseback . . . Thus ornamented and equipped withal in a flowing white periwig, the prince of seven summers made his bow in his mother's circle at St. James's to congratulate her on her birthday.

Kneller painted him as he was that day and in normal times the picture may be seen at Hampton Court.

Queen Victoria was more modest in her ideas but she was very fond of making Highlanders of her sons, especially after Balmoral was bought and the Prince of Wales made a sensation in Paris in his Highland costume at the age of thirteen. Seven years earlier he had been portrayed as a British Tar, a costume in which his own sons were often photographed later on. We now come to that period when Kate Greenaway, Walter Crane and Randolph Caldecott set to work to design and draw costume specially for children. No doubt that influence is a little spent in these days but "Greenaway" costumes are still in favour for pages and small bridesmaids at weddings. Walter Crane's purpose was "in a measure educative." Kate Greenaway, on the other hand (and, no doubt Caldecott too), "sought for nothing but children's unthinking delight." In the eighteen-seventies and eighties the Greenaway cult was at its height, helped a good deal by Ruskin's generous praise of "minuteness and delicacy of touch carried to its utmost limit, visible in its perfection to the eyes of youth, but neither executed

WITH a magnifying glass nor, except to aged eyes, needing one. Even I, at sixty four, can see the essential qualities of the work without spectacles; only the youngest of my friends here can see, for example, Kate's fairy dance perfectly, but they can with their own bright eyes. "Her pictures," wrote her biographers, "delight the little ones for their own sake and delight us for the sake of the little ones; and it may be taken as certain that Kate Greenaway's position in the Art of England is assured, so long as her drawings speak to us out of their broad and tender humanity, and carry their message to every little heart."



CHAPTER XV

“Deportment”

WE have passed now through various phases of childhood and approach that period in life at which, looking into the future, parents were accustomed to offer, and dutiful children to accept, advice on all which may be comprised in the word *Deportment*. The judicious parent or relative drew on experience of life to give advice on such matters as Religion, Amusement, Accomplishments and, above all, Behaviour.

Such advice was offered prodigally in days when children might be expected to take some notice of it and I have chosen four specimens. “Advice to a Daughter” by George Savile, first Marquess of Halifax, one of the ornaments of Charles II’s Court

IN genius (to quote Macaulay) the first. His intellect was fertile, subtle and capacious. His polished, luminous and animated eloquence, set off by the silver tones of his voice, were the delight of the House of Lords. His conversation overflowed with thought, fancy and wit. His political tracts well deserve to be studied for their literary merit, and fully entitle him to a place among English classics.

Next, coming forward into the 18th century, there is Philip, fourth Earl of Chesterfield, ambassador, statesman, Viceroy of Ireland, Secretary of State. Unfortunate enough to have earned the enmity of Samuel Johnson, his Letters are yet among the classics of their kind.

Thirdly I have chosen Mrs. Chapone, essayist, woman of letters, friend of Johnson and Fanny Burney who wrote of her as

THE most superiorly unaffected creature you can conceive, and full of *agremens* from good sense, talents, and conversational powers, in defiance of age, infirmities and uncommon ugliness.

Lastly from Edinburgh, Dr. John Gregory, member of one of the most famous of medical families, who died in 1773, and father of that professor of the practice of medicine in Edinburgh University who concocted the powder of which I have had something to say in an earlier chapter.

Halifax's *Advice* was written for a daughter who was still a child but, as he pointed out

FEW things are well learnt, but by early Precepts; those well infus'd, make them Natural; and we are never sure of retaining what is valuable, till by a continued Habit we have made it a piece of us.

He was not without the cynicism of his age but much that he wrote should be valuable to any girl to-day. Thus he concludes his advice on Religion thus

LET me recommend to you a method of being rightly inform'd which can never fail: It is in short this. Get Understanding and practise Vertue. And if you are so Blessed as to have those for your Share, it is not surer that there is a God, than it is that by Him, all Necessary Truths will be revealed to you.

On the subject of Marriage he has this warning to give to a girl who may have been the spoilt darling of the childhood's home. He bids her

AS much as Nature will give you leave, endeavour to forget the great Indulgence you have found at Home. After such a gentle discipline as you have been under, everything you dislike will seem the harsher to you. The tenderness we have had for you, My Dear, is of another nature, peculiar to kind Parents and differing from that which you wil

meet with first in any Family into which you shall be transplanted; and yet they may be very kind too . . . You must not be frightened with the first Appearance of a differing Scene; for when you are used to it, you may like the House you go to better than that you left; and your Husband's Kindness will have so much advantage of ours, that we shall yield up all Competition, and as well as we love you, be very well contented to Surrender to such a Rival.

Of the House and Family he tells her that

no respect is lasting, but that which is produced by our being in some degree useful to those that pay it. Where that faileth the Homage and the Reverence go along with it . . . And upon this principle the respects even of the Children and the Servants will not stay with one that doth not make them worth their Care. An old Housekeeper shall make a better Figure in the Family, than the Lady with all her fine Cloaths, if she wilfully relinquishes her Title to the Government. Therefore take heed of carrying your good Breeding to such a height as to be good for nothing and to be proud of it. Some think it hath a great air to be above troubling their thoughts with such ordinary things as their House and Family . . . Mistaken Pride maketh some think they must keep themselves up, and not descend to those Duties which do not seem enough refined for great Ladies to be imploy'd in; forgetting, all this while, that it is more than the greatest Princes can do at once to preserve respect, and to neglect their business.

When he comes to “Behaviour and Conversation” he warns her that

it is time now to lead you out of your House into the World. A dangerous step where your Virtue alone will not secure you except it is attended with a great deal of Prudence. You must have both for your Guard and not stir without them. . . . To the Men you are to have a Behaviour which may secure you, without offending them. No ill-bred affected Shyness nor a Roughness, unsuitable to your sex, and unnecessary to your Vertue; but a way of Living that may prevent all coarse Railleries or unmannerly Freedoms; Looks that forbid without Rudeness and oblige without Invitation, or leaving room for the sawcy Inferences Men's Vanity suggesteth to them upon the least Encouragement.

May you so raise your Character, that you may help to make the next Age a better thing, and leave Posterity in your Debt for the advantage which it shall receive by your Example.

We come next to Lord Chesterfield's Letters to the natural son on whom he lavished his affection. Chesterfield's Letters are represented, perhaps by some who have not read them, as inculcating a system of superficial politeness and good manners. It is true that, like the others whom I am quoting, he set great store by good manners and we need not argue the question whether we should prefer that kind of self-conscious "sincerity" which follows up some gross rudeness with "I come from Blankshire, I do; I say what I think."

In fact Lord Chesterfield's advice did not achieve its aim. His anxious admonitions and exhortations were by no means crowned with success. Philip Stanhope became a man of deep learning and sound sense; but utterly wanting in what his father so highly prized—the graces. At least no time was wasted for the boy was only in his ninth year when he was warned:

THAT, as learning, honour and virtue are absolutely necessary to gain you the esteem and admiration of mankind, politeness and good breeding are equally necessary to make you welcome and agreeable in conversation in common life . . . It is extremely rude not to give the proper attention and a civil answer when people speak to you; or to go away, or be doing something else, while they are speaking to you; for that convinces them that you despise them, and do not think it worth your while to hear or answer what they say.

What is the way then to arrive at that perfection, which you promise to aim at? It is, first, to do your duty towards God and man; without which, everything else signifies nothing; secondly, to acquire great knowledge without which you will be a very contemptible man though you may be a very honest one and, lastly, to be very well bred; without which you will be a very disagreeable unpleasing man, though you should be an honest and a learned one.

He goes on in another letter to define what he means by a perfect good breeding:

WHICH is equally inconsistent with a stiff formality, an impertinent forwardness, and an awkward bashfulness. A little ceremony is often necessary; a certain degree of firmness is absolutely so; and an outward modesty is extremely becoming; the knowledge of the world

and your own observation, must, and alone can, tell you the proper quantities of each.

When the boy was fourteen he hears a case in the King's Bench and comments “Upon the inattention of many of the people in the Court” and this brings a little lecture:

AS you observed very well the indecency of that inattention I am sure you will never be guilty of anything like it yourself. There is no surer sign in the world of a little, weak mind than inattention. Whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well; and nothing can be done well without attention. It is the sure answer of a fool, when you ask him about anything that was said or done where he was present, that, ‘Truly he did not mind it.’ A man of sense sees, hears, and retains everything that passes where he is.

A little later he gives a warning against indiscriminate judgments. Still only fourteen the boy seems to think that women “from Eve downwards, have done a great deal of mischief.”

HISTORY will inform you that men have done much more mischief in the world than women . . . but this I will advise you to, which is never to attack whole bodies of any kind; for, besides that all general rules have their exception, you unnecessarily make yourself a great number of enemies, by attacking a corps collectively. Among women, as among men, there are good as well as bad and it may be full as many, or more, good than among men . . . All general reflections upon nations and societies, are but trite, threadbare jokes of those who set up for wit without having any, and so have recourse to common place. Judge of individuals from your own knowledge of them and not from their sex, profession, or denomination.

Again and again he denounces that state of mind which he stigmatised in the words “one may as well not know a thing at all as know it but imperfectly.”

AND what is called a smattering of everything infallibly constitutes a coxcomb . . . The conversation of the ignorant is no conversation and gives even them no pleasure.

But knowledge must not be confined to books. “I comprehend in it the great knowledge of the world still more necessary than that of books.”

Of all the advice available to the young lady of the 18th century passing from nursery and school into the great world, none was considered more valuable than that of Mrs. Chapone, friend of Dr. Johnson, patron of the Academy of the Misses Pinkerton and of many others. Her "Letters on the Improvement of the Mind" were read by generations of girls and they provided a complete philosophy of Deportment. Thus in her Letter "On Politeness and Accomplishments," she warns her readers that

IN a young lady's behaviour towards gentlemen, great delicacy is certainly required; yet, I believe women often err from too great a consciousness of the supposed views of men, than from inattention to those views, or want of caution against them. I could wish that you should . . . retain the simplicity and innocence of childhood with the sense and dignity of riper years. Men of loose morals of impertinent behaviour must always be avoided, or if at any time you are obliged to be in their company, you must keep them at a distance by cold civility. But with regard to those gentlemen whom your parents think it proper for you to converse with, and who give no offence by their own manners, to them I wish you to behave with the same frankness and simplicity as if they were of your own sex.

Is this old fashioned and out of date or is it rather the kind of advice which, even in this age, a wise mother would give to her daughter?

She goes on

IF you have natural modesty, you will never transgress its bounds, whilst you converse with a man, as one rational creature with another, without any view to the possibility of a lover or admirer where nothing of that kind is professed; where it is I hope you will ever be equally a stranger to coquetry or prudery; and that you will be able to distinguish the effects of real esteem and love from idle gallantry and unmeaning fine speeches; the slighter notice you take of these last the better; and that, rather with good humoured contempt than with affected gravity; but the first must be treated with seriousness and well bred sincerity; not giving the least encouragement, which you do not mean, nor assuming airs of contempt where it is not deserved.

And here is something about politeness, an art too often neglected in these days

THE principles of politeness are the same in all places. Wherever there

are human beings, it must be impolite to hurt the temper or to shock the passion of those you converse with. It must everywhere be good breeding to set your companions in the most advantageous point of light, by giving each the opportunity of displaying their most agreeable talents, and by carefully avoiding all occasions of exposing their defects; to exert your own endeavours to please, but not to outshine them; to give each their due share of attention and notice; not engrossing the talk, when others are desirous to speak, nor suffering the conversation to flag, for want of introducing something to continue or renew a subject; not to push your advantage in argument so far that your antagonist cannot retreat with honour—in short it is an universal duty in society to consider others more than yourself; “in honour preferring one another.”

All this perhaps hardly conforms to the manners and customs of a modern sherry party but it has its attractive side.

Of accomplishments Mrs. Chapone preferred study of English, French and Italian for women as against Latin and Greek, pointing out that excellent translations of the classics could be found in those three languages. For the rest

WHATEVER tends to embellish your fancy, to enlighten your understanding, and furnish you with ideas to reflect upon when alone, or to converse upon when in company, is certainly well worth your acquisition. The wretched expedient, to which ignorance so often drives our sex, of calling in slander to enliven the tedious insipidity of conversation, would alone be a strong reason for enriching your mind with innocent subjects of entertainment, which may render you a fit companion for persons of sense and knowledge from whom you may reap the most desirable improvements, for though I think reading indispensably necessary to the due cultivation of your mind, I prefer the conversation of such persons to every other method of instruction; but this you cannot hope to enjoy unless you qualify yourself to bear a part in such society, by, at least a moderate share of reading.

The editor of *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters* by Dr. John Gregory explains that

IN the writer of these letters paternal tenderness and vigilance were doubled, as he was at that time sole parent; death having before deprived the young ladies of their excellent mother. His own pre-

carious state of health inspired him with the most tender solicitude for their future welfare; and though he might have concluded that the impression made by his instructions and uniform example could never be effaced from the memory of his children, yet his anxiety for their orphan condition suggested to him this method of continuing to them these advantages.

Dr. Gregory's letters are concerned with Religion, Behaviour, Amusements, Friendship, Love, Marriage. On the subject of behaviour he was one of those who thought that manners had declined. Writing in the last half of the 18th century he declares that

EVERYONE who remembers a few years back is sensible of a very striking change in the attention and respect formerly paid by the gentlemen to the ladies. Their drawing-rooms are deserted; and after dinner and supper, the gentlemen are impatient till they retire. How they came to lose this respect, I shall not here particularly enquire. The revolutions of manners in any country depend on causes very various and complicated. I shall only observe that the behaviour of the ladies in the last age was very reserved and stately. It would now be reckoned ridiculously stiff and formal. Whatever it was, it had certainly the effect of making them more respected.

One can only hope that in Elysium Dr. Gregory has no opportunity of studying modern manners. He goes on:

BY the present mode of female manners, the ladies seem to expect that they shall regain their ascendancy over us, by the fullest display of their personal charms, by being always in our eye at public places, by conversing with us with the same unreserved freedom as we do with one another; in short by resembling us as nearly as they possibly can.

He feels that he has something better to offer:

LET me now recommend to your attention that elegance, which is not so much a quality itself as the high polish of every other. It is what diffuses an ineffable grace over every look, every motion, every sentence you utter. It gives that charm to beauty without which it generally fails to please . . . In a word it is the perfection of taste in life and manner; every virtue and every excellency in their most graceful and amiable forms.

On the subject of amusements he is in some ways more “modern.”

I WOULD particularly recommend to you these exercises that oblige you to be much abroad in the open air, such as walking, and riding on horseback. This will give vigour to your constitutions and the bloom to your complexions. If you accustom yourselves to go abroad always in chairs and carriages, you will soon become so enervated as to be unable to go out of doors without them. They are, like most articles of luxury, useful and agreeable when judiciously used but when made habitual, they become insipid and pernicious.

On the other hand he seems to have thought that good health must not be too much paraded.

BUT though good health be one of the greatest blessings of life, never make a boast of it, but enjoy it in grateful silence. We so naturally associate the idea of female softness and delicacy with a correspondent delicacy of constitution, that when a woman speaks of her great strength, her extraordinary appetite, her ability to bear excessive fatigue, we recoil at the description in a way she is little aware of.

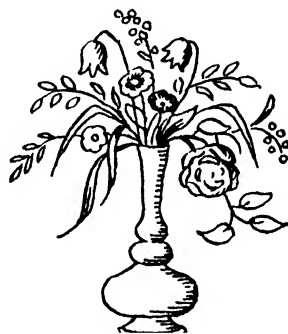
He does not shrink from giving advice about dress:

DRESS is an important article in female life. The love of dress is natural to you, and therefore it is proper and reasonable. Good sense will regulate your expense in it and good taste will direct you to dress in such a way as to conceal any blemishes and set off your beauties, if you have any, to the greatest advantage. But much delicacy and judgement are required in the application of this rule. A fine woman shows her charms to most advantage, when she seems most to conceal them. The finest bosom in nature is not so fine as what imagination forms. The most perfect elegance of dress appears always the most easy and the least studied. Do not confine your attention to dress to your public appearances. Accustom yourselves to an habitual neatness, so that in the most careless undress, in your most unguarded hours, you may have no reason to be ashamed of your appearance.

Perhaps we cannot end better than with a sentence from his chapter on love and marriage:

GENUINE love is not founded in caprice; it is founded on nature, on honourable views, on virtue, on similarity of tastes and sympathy of

souls . . . Marriage, indeed, will at once dispel the enchantment raised by external beauty; but the virtues and graces that first warmed the heart, that reserve and delicacy which always left the lover something further to wish, and often made him doubtful of your sensibility or attachment, may and ought ever to remain. The tumult of passion will necessarily subside; but it will be succeeded by an endearment, that affects the heart in a more equal, more sensible, and tender manner.



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